

*Self-Consideration necessary
to Self-Preservation:*

OR, THE

FOLLY

O F

Despising our own Souls,

AND

Our own ways.

Open'd in Two **SERMONS**
to Young People;

The {former } on { **PROV. 15. 32.**
later } { **PROV. 19. 16.**

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the Gospel. *K*

L O N D O N,

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THE
FOLLY



To the READER.

I Was far from any Thoughts of publishing these two plain Discourses, when I preach'd the former of them, at the Request of Mr. Billingsley and his Catechumens, the 25th of the last Month, being Monday in Whitfun-week, a Day of Leisure; having design'd not to trouble the Press any more till the Fifth Volume of EXPOSITIONS was ready for it, which, if GOD spare my Life and Health, and continue his Gracious Assistances, I hope will be by the End of this Year, and which (to answer a Question that I am often ask'd) I purpose shall contain the four Evangelists and the ACTS, if the LORD will.

The Importunity of the many that earnestly desir'd me to publish that Sermon should not have overcome me to alter my Purpose, if the Advice of some of my Brethren, whose Judgment I have a value for, had not over-rul'd me to think it might be worth while

TO the READER.

to take so much Time from my Greater Work as the preparing and enlarging of that Sermon for the Press would require.

And this made me the more easily to yield to those who very earnestly press'd me to publish the later Sermon, which was preach'd the Day following, at the Request of Mr. Gordon and his Catechumens.

It grieves me, (yet not so much as it should) to see among the Children of my People a great Carelesness and Unconcernedness about the things that belong to their Everlasting Peace: I lament it in myself, and therefore I hope I shall not be blam'd if I thus endeavour, as GOD enables me, to awaken my self and others to a due Seriousness in those things which relate to the Soul and Eternity; I think it can do harm to none: I hope it may do good to some. And nothing more likely to cool and compose the Heated and Disquieted Minds of Men, than thus to turn their Zeal into the right Chancel.

*June 4.
1713.*

M. H.

(1)

THE
FOLLY
OF

Despising our own Souls.

PROV. XV. 32.

*He that refuseth Instruction de-
spiseth his own Soul.*——

Solomon's Proverbs being generally Serm. I.
design'd to instruct us in our Duty
to GOD and Man, many of them
are particularly intended to dispose
us to receive those Sacred Dictates,
and to make way for the rest, by opening the
Ear to Instruction, and bowing the Heart to
comply with it. If People were but wil-
ling and desirous to learn, the Teacher's
Work were half done: But (as saith the
Proverb of the Ancients) *They that will not
be counsel'd cannot be help'd.* How should
those attain to Knowledge and Grace, that
will not be reconcil'd to the Means of
Knowledge and Grace.

Serm. I. In this Text Solomon gives such an account of those (in a few words) whom he found he could do no good upon, as makes their Folly manifest before all men. Tho' this Princely Preacher made it his Business still to teach the People Knowledge; tho' his Sermons were elaborate, and well-study'd, for he gave good heed, and sought out and set in order many Proverbs; tho' his Discourses were plain and practical, sententious and methodical; tho' he took pains to find out acceptable Words, and that which was written was upright, even Words of Truth; yet there were those that were never the better for such a Preacher, and such Preaching. Now Solomon gives this short account of them, and then leaves you to judg concerning them; They refuse Instruction, and in so doing they despise their own Souls. We, that have the Gospel preach'd among us, and Wisdom her self by it teaching in our Streets, may truly say that, behold, a greater than Solomon is here, and yet, as to Multitudes, he stretcheth out his Hand in vain; even Israel is not gather'd, His Ministers labour in vain among them. And what's the Reason?

Ecc. 12.
9, 10.

1. They refuse Instruction. The Fool in the Text (and he is, without doubt, more despicable than the Fool in the Play) is describ'd to be one that refuseth Instruction פִּירֵעַ מִיָּד We have the same words, and thus translated, Poverty and Shame shall be to him that refuseth Instruction; that neglects Instruction, so some, puts it far

Chap. 13.
18.

far from him, and sets himself at a distance *Serm. I.*
 from it; not only because he hates it, but
 because he fears it. That strips himself of
Instruction; that's another Signification of
 the word, (not only *elongare*, but *denudare*)
 that shaking off his Education, as a Gar-
 ment he will not be *beated with*, or *ham-*
per'd with, makes himself naked, to his
 shame. Nay, the Original Word has a
 further Signification, (*ulcisci*) He that will
 be *reveng'd on Instruction*; that takes it for
 an *Affront*, and studies Revenge if he be told
 of his Faults.

The Word for *Instruction* the Margin
 reads *Correction*; for in our fallen state,
 when we are *all wrong*, that which *instructs*
us must *correct us*; we cannot be taught to
 do well, but we must be shew'd wherein
 we have done ill. *The Rod and Reproof*
give Wisdom. The *Corrections* of Provi-
 dence are intended for *Instruction*: *Blessed*
*is the Man whom thou chastenest and teache-
 st*. But many, tho' they cannot help being
 chastened, yet *refuse* and *reject* the *Instruc-*
tion design'd them by the Chastening, and
 will not learn *any* of the *many* good Lessons
 design'd to be taught them by the Chasten-
 ing: Instead of that, they *strive with their*
Maker, and *kick against the Pricks*. They
 will not comply with the *Correction*, or
 answer the Ends of it. They *refuse Disci-*
plin; they will not be under check and
 controul, will *no more be admonish'd*.

Serm.I. (1.) They refuse to *bear Instruction*; they turn their Backs upon the Word, and will not come where it is preach'd, if they can help it. *Wisdom* crys, and they get out of the hearing of her Cries, *one to his Farm, and another to his Merchandise*. A little *Formality* of Devotion they can dispense with, to save their Credit, and keep up their Reputation among Men, *Missa non mordet*, but the close and powerful Application of the Word, as a *Discerner of the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart*, they cannot bear: They cannot go so far as Ezekiel's Hearers, to whom his Preaching was as a *lovely Song*, charming enough, and which, as they heard it, help'd to lull them asleep; but it is to them as the *sound of a Trumpet, the Alarm of War*; it makes their Ears to tingle, and therefore they get as far as they can from it.

Ezek. 33.
32.

(2.) They refuse to *heed it*; like the *deaf Adder*, they (if they should come within hearing of it) *stop their Ears*, and will not *bearken to the Voice of the Charmer*, *charm he never so wisely*. If they cannot keep it from sounding in their Ears, they keep it from *sinking into their Hearts*, and, if possible, will keep it from going any further. They do not value Instruction, they see no need of it, and therefore do not desire it. *The Word of the Lord is to them a Reproach*, they are weary of it; yea, tho' it should come from the Mouth of Christ himself; witness the Lawyer that complain'd;

Psal. 58.
4. 5.

Jer. 6. 10.

plain'd, *Master, in so saying thou reproachest us also.* Luk. 11. 45. Serm. I.

(3.) They refuse to *comply with it*; they will do as they have a mind, whatever they are *told or taught* to the contrary: *They have loved Strangers*, and whatever you can say to put them out of love with them, *after them they will go.* They hold *fast Deceit*, tho' they are told of the Deceitfulness of it, *and refuse to return.* This is the Way of many, who are *running headlong* upon their own Ruin, and hate to be *stop'd.* Jer. 2. 25.
Jer. 8. 5.

But it may be thought improper for me to insist upon this now, when I am call'd to address my self to a number of Serious Young-men, who are every Lord's Day Evening catechiz'd in this place, and who are so far from *refusing Instruction*, that they *covet it*, they *delight* in it, they are forward to *receive it*, and, as the good Ground, *drink in this Rain* that comes off upon them; who have piously projected and combin'd to set up this Exercise, and diligently attend it, not only for their own Benefit, but for the Benefit of many; for what is said to them, is said to all; and whoever will, may come and feed upon that *Bread of Life* which is broken to them.

Yet to them it may be of use to hear of the Sin and Folly of them that *refuse Instruction*, of the many that do so.

1. Bless GOD, who *made you to differ*; and let his Grace have all the Glory, which

Serm. J. has given your Hearts, by Nature corrupt as others, such a different Bent from what *it was*, from what *others are* : That you are *crying after Knowledge*, when others are *crying out against it* ; are *seeking it as Silver*, when others are seeking *Silver* only, and not *it* ; are *delighting to know God's Ways*, when others are delighting in the By-paths of Sin and Vanity ; are helping to *let many into the Knowledge of Christ*, when there are those that are contriving to *take away the Key of Knowledge* ; you have reason to say with Thankfulness, *Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thy self to us, and not unto the World?* You ought not to take a *Pride* in it, the Honour of it is *spoild* if you do so, you have nothing to *boast of* : But you ought to *give God the Praise* ; the Honour of it is *doubled* if you do so, for you have a great deal to be *thankful for*. Who teacheth like God ?

Prov. 21.

3. 4.

Poh. 14.
22.

2. Take heed, lest any of you should, notwithstanding this, be found among those that *refuse Instruction* ; that are *pleas'd* with it, and yet are not *rul'd* by it. It is not enough for you to have a pleasing Relish of Divine Truths, but you must be *deliver'd into the Mould* of them ; your Souls must be *transform'd* by them, and *conform'd* to them. The Instructions given you must be *transcrib'd* and *copied out* into your whole Conversations, must guide and regulate them, must not only restrain them from the gross Pollutions of Sin, but must *beautifie* and *adorn* them with every thing that's

that's *Excellent* and *Praise-worthy*. You Serm. I.
that are so much in the *Mourne* with God
on the *Lord's Day*, ought to shew it, as *Moses*
did, by the *shining* of your *Faces*, in all
Instances of *Wisdom* and *Grace*, all the
Week after. That Man doth but *shame*
himself who boasts how long he went to
the *Writing-School*, and yet writes an *ill*
Hand; or to the *Dancing-School*, and yet
has an *ill Carriage*; much more doth that
Man do so, who boasts how much he has
been conversant with the Principles of the
Christian Religion, and yet *submits* not to
the *Laws* of it, nor *practiseth* according
to it.

3. *Pity* those that *refuse Instruction*, and
do not despise them, but if you can do
any thing, *have Compassion upon them*, and
help them. — You may have an *Opportu-*
nity, perhaps in your *common Converse*, to
influence some that have hitherto turn'd a
deaf Ear to the Calls of God, to be wil-
ling to hearken to Christ, and to bring
them in by degrees to a liking of those
Truths of God which they have been *pre-*
judic'd against, and those Instances of *Seri-*
ous Godliness which they have look'd up-
on with *Contempt*; and they that will not
be won by the *Word*, may be won upon by
your *Conversation* with them. 1 Pet. 3. 1

4. What is said of the *Folly* of those that
refuse Instruction, is the commendation of
the *Wisdom* of those that *receive Instruction*.
You do well for your selves, and so it will
appear *shortly*; and therefore *Go on and*
prosper,

The Folly of despising

Serm. I. prosper, for the Lord is with you while you be with him: Encourage your selves and one another in so good a Work, and be not weary in well-doing.

2. They that refuse Instruction thereby make it to appear, that they *despise their own Souls*; they evidence that they have very low and mean thoughts of *their Souls*. Now this is here mention'd as a very *absurd* thing, and that which no *rational Man* will own himself guilty of, and yet which every *wicked Man* is really guilty of. He that refuseth Instruction, *μισήει τον εαυτόν*, so the 70, he *bates himself*; despiseth himself; for our Souls are indeed *ourselves*. *Animus cujusque n̄ est quisque.*

There is a *despising ourselves* which is commendable, and our Duty, the same with *denying ourselves*, abasing, abhorring, and humbling ourselves. The *Poor in Spirit* despise themselves; those that are willing to suffer rather than to sin despise their own Lives, and do not count *them dear*. This Gracious *Self-contempt* is a Qualification for the greatest Honour and Advancement, to which nothing is a greater Bar than *Self-conceit*, and making an Idol of ourselves.

But there is a *Despising* of ourselves and of *our own Souls* which is *culpable*, and of pernicious consequence, such a piece of Folly as is the Cause of abundance of other Folly, and particularly this of *refusing Instruction*. By giving us *Divine Revelation* for the enlightning and directing, the re-
newing

newing and sanctifying of *our Souls*, God *Serm.I.*
has put the greatest Honour imaginable
upon them, has distinguish'd them not only
from the *Beasts of the Earth*, and the *Fowls*
of *Heaven*, but from many and mighty Na-
tions of the Earth. Now if we regard not
the Dictates of Divine Revelation, we
throw away this Honour God has put
upon *our Souls*, and declare we do not
value it.

The Honour of the Soul is, that it is
rational and *immortal*: Now they that re-
fuse Divine Instruction despise their own Souls
under both these Considerations; for the
Design of that Instruction is to cure, direct,
and cultivate the *Rational Powers* of the
Soul, to support their Authority, and assist
their Operations: If therefore we have any
value for that part of their Honour, we
will receive that Instruction. 'Tis likewise
intended to prepare the Soul for its future
and *immortal* state, and so to secure to it
a *blessed Immortality*: If therefore we have
any value for that part of our Soul's Ho-
nour, we will reckon the Instructions of
God's Word well worthy of all accepta-
tion.

But I shall speak to it more generally,
that I may take in more of the many In-
stances of *Contempt* which People put upon
their own Souls. And being desir'd to ad-
dress myself particularly to *Young People*,
I know not how I could better serve the
Design I have upon them, which is, to en-
gage them to be truly religious *betimes*,
than

Serm. I. than by possessing them with a Value for
 ~~~~~ their own Souls, and arming them against  
 the Folly of despising them. If the Soul  
 is the Man, (as certainly it is) as there is  
 a Holy Self-love, so there is a Holy Self-  
 esteem which is necessary to that due Con-  
 cern which we all ought to have about our  
 Souls and Eternity.

Take this then for the Doctrine,  
*That it is the greatest Absurdity and Folly  
 imaginable for Men to despise their own  
 Souls. Or thus, It is the Original Er-  
 ror of wilful Sinners, that they undervalue  
 their own Souls.*

In prosecution of this I shall endeavour,  
 (1) To shew who they are that despise their  
 own Souls. And (2) to prove the Absur-  
 dity and Folly of it. And (3) to make  
 some Application of it.

For the First, How do People make it  
 appear that they despise their own Souls?  
 Who? Where is he that is guilty of such  
 a gross Absurdity?

1. Some despise their own Souls in Opi-  
 nion; who advance Notions of the Human  
 Soul that derogate from the Honour of it,  
 and put Men upon a level with the Beasts  
 that perish; that care not how mean a Cha-  
 racter they put upon the Soul, so they can  
 but place their own Souls from under God's  
 Government and Judgment.



The *Atheists* and *Sadducees* of the Age, Serm. I. that believe there is no *Substance*, but *Matter*, and shut out all *incorporeal Nature* out of the number of *Beings*, and consequently make their own Souls to be only a particular Species of Matter *modified* and *put in motion*, so as to produce *Sense* and *Perception*, and that that's it which thinks and apprehends, that reflects and deliberates, doubteth and determineth, chuseth and refuseth; that all the Performances of Philosophy and Politicks are the Products of Matter and Motion; and, in short, that Man is but a very little above the *Beasts*, whereas the Word of God has made him but a very little below the *Angels*. The Absurdity of these Notions is philosophically demonstrated by Dr. Bentley, in his *Confutation of Atheism from the Faculties of the Soul*. But it is no wonder Men can look within them and say *they have no Souls*, when they are such Fools as to look about them and say, *There is no God*.

Many that would be thought to understand themselves better than their Neighbors, that they may get clear of the Obligations of Reason and Conscience, under colour of *Wit* wage War with *Wisdom*; and that they may not be charg'd with neglecting the Salvation, or incurring the Damnation of their own Souls, chuse rather to despise them, as not capable either of Salvation or Damnation; and that they may not come under the imputation of acting *unreasonably*, ridicule *Reason*, as the

## The Folly of despising

Serm. I. *Ignis fatuus* of the Mind; so it is call'd in a prophane Poem which I remember to have seen in Manuscript long since, (I know not whether ever it was printed) call'd a *Satyr upon Man*. It begun thus:

*Were I (who to my cost already am  
One of those strange prodigious Creatures Man)  
A Spirit, free to chuse for my own share  
What Case of Flesh and Blood I'd please to wear,  
I'd rather be a Monkey, Dog, or Bear,  
Or any thing than that vain Animal  
That boasts himself of being rational.*

Those who speak thus scornfully of that noble Rank of Beings, and of the Faculties and Capacities of their own Souls, make me think of that of Solomon, Eccl. 10. 3. *When he that is a Fool walketh by the way, his Wisdom faileth him, and he saith to every one that he is a Fool.*

Those despise their own Souls that deny the Immortality of them; who, that they may justify themselves in living like Beasts, expect no other but to die like Beasts. *Ede*  
 Isa. 22. 13. *bibe lude post mortem nulla voluptas*, Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we die, and there's an end of us. What a Contempt do they put upon this Candle of the Lord, who think 'tis put out by Death, whereas 'tis only taken out of a dark Lanthorn and set upon a Candlestick, where it extends its Light much further! And how ridiculously do the Pretenders to *Free-thinking* insinuate that Solomon, in his *Ecclesiastes*,  
 Chap.

Chap. 3. 21, speaks *doubtfully* of the Existence of the Soul in a state of separation from the Body, *Who knows that the Spirit of a Man goes upward?* whereas he speaks so very *expressly*, and with the greatest Assurance of it, in the same Book, Chap. 12. 7. that *when the Dust returns to the Earth as it was, the Spirit returns to God, who gave it;* and in that other place only speaks as one *in the dark* concerning the manner of its Remove to that separate state; *None knows* Eccl. 11. 5. *the way of the Spirit*, either into the Body, or out of it.

The sober Heathen will rise up in Judgment against such Men of this Generation, and will condemn them; for tho' they had no Divine Revelation, as we have, to acquaint them how Man at first became a *living Soul*; That *there is a Spirit in Man*, and that *the Inspiration of the Almighty giveth them Understanding*; That Death itself cannot *kill the Soul*; and, That *it shall be redeem'd from the Power of the Grave*; yet had admirable Notions of the excellent Nature of the Human Soul, and of its Immortality: They look'd upon it to be a Ray of Divine Light, a Spark of Divine Fire. *Quid aliud voces Animam quam Deum in Corpore hospitantem*, saith Tully. He could not say that the Soul of Man was made *in the Image of God*, and after his likeness, because he was not told so, as we are, but he saith that which is equivalent.

Serm. I. But among you here I hope I need not enlarge upon these things; you know and believe that GOD has given to every Man a Soul of his own which is immaterial, intelligent, and immortal, which is *form'd* by the Father of Spirits, is nearly *ally'd* to the World of Spirits, and must shortly *remove* to that World. The Lord strengthen and encrease our Faith herein, and fortifie us against the sly and subtil Insinuations of of those that *lie in wait to deceive*!

2. Many more, who give not in with the Notions of those that thus in Opinion despise their own Souls, and professedly degrade them, yet *in Practise* despise them; as those who will give to a Great Man his Titles of Honour, and yet look upon him as a *vile Person* that is to be *contemn'd*. As many who *profess they know God*, and his Glory, so many who profess they know the Dignity of their own Souls, yet *in Works deny* both the one and the other.

Those despise their own Souls, (1) That *abuse* them. (2) That *bazard* them. (3) That *neglect* them. (4) That *prefer their Bodies* before them.

*First*, Those that *abuse their own Souls* may truly be said to *despise* them. Those we *do Injury* to we put the greatest Contempt upon, as not worthy to have *Right* done them. *Solomon* fastens this Brand of Foolishness and Madness upon those who sin against God, that *they wrong their own Souls*, to that degree, that they may be said



to be in love with the *Dearth* and *Ruin* of **Serm. I.**  
 them. Those that *wrong* their Servants,   
 and *abuse* them, shew that they *despise* them, **Prov. 8. 36**  
 and *set them with the Dogs of their Flock* :  
 So those that without Compassion, or even  
 sense of Equity and Justice, put *Despise*  
 upon their Souls, do indeed despise them.  
 O what *base Usage* do many People give  
 their own Souls, and as the *Ostrich* against  
 her young ones, are *harden'd against them as*  
*tho' they were not theirs.*

1. Those abuse their own Souls that *de-*  
*vote them to the Service of Satan* ; as all  
 wilfully-wicked People do, that make them-  
 selves *his Children* by doing *his Lusts*, and **Joh. 8. 44.**  
 surrender themselves his Slaves and Vassals  
 to be *led Captive by him at his will*, and held  
 fast in *his Snare* ; that being *Children of*  
*Disobedience*, yield themselves not only to **2 Tim. 2. 26.**  
*work for*, but, which is worse, to be *wrought*  
*upon by the Prince of the power of the Air.* **Eph. 2. 2.**  
 The Faculties of the Soul are employ'd in  
 doing *Satan's Will*, and serving his Interest,  
 so that the Man seems list'd under *Satan's*  
*Banner* ; he is for *Baal*, and not on the  
 Lord's side ; with *Beelzebub*, and therefore  
 not only not *with Christ*, but *against*  
*him.*

It is the Honour of our Souls that they  
 are made to be the *Temples of the Holy*  
*Ghost*, the *living Temples of the living God* ;  
 they are capable of being so, and intended  
 to be so ; than which, what greater Ho-  
 nour could be put upon them ? But how  
 then do those *dishonour* their own Souls  
 that

Serm. I. that suffer *Satan*, that Apostate from God and Rebel against him, the Head of the Apostacy and Rebellion, to keep his Palace as a Rival with God, nay, and to keep *Garrison* as an Enemy against God, in the Soul, and are willing not only that his Goods should be in peace, and unmolested, but that all the Powers of the Soul should be employ'd for him, and be Armour for him to trust in.

Luk. 11.  
21, 22.

It is the Honour of our Souls that they have a Relation to Heaven, are in alliance with that upper World; and tho' they have by Sin very much lost their Acquaintance with it, yet they are still thro' Grace capable of keeping up a Correspondence with it, and stand fair for an Inheritance in it. What greater Dishonour then can they put upon themselves, than by entering into a League with the Devil, (and all that go on still in their Trespases do so, instead of entering into a War with him) who left his first State there, was shamefully thrust out thence, cast down to Hell, and is in no manner of Hopes, as we are, to retrieve the Honour from which he is degraded? Shall Fire from Heaven mingle itself with Fire from Hell? Or that Spirit of a Man which is the Candle of the Lord, the Light which lighteth every Man that cometh into this World, come into the Interests of the Rulers of the Darkness of this World? Can it forget itself so far?

It is the Honour of our Souls that they Serm.I.  
 are made capable of *-serving God*, of doing *his Will*, carrying on *his Work*, and so of  
*pleasing him*, and *praising him*, and advancing the Interests of his Kingdom among  
 Men : Those Souls therefore are *basely abused* that are subjected to the Power of  
 Satan, and are under his Conduct. Our Saviour has represented this to us in the  
 Parable of the *Prodigal Son*, who when he had spent and wasted all his Portion, (representing the wretched havock which *outrageous*  
*Sinners* make of their Knowledge and Gifts, the *Sparks* of Virtue that were  
*struck* into their Minds by a good Education, and the Convictions of their own  
 Consciences) then *disparag'd himself* to the last degree, when he went and joyn'd him-  
 self to a *Citizen of that Country*, who sent him into his Fields to feed Swine ; repre- Luk.15.13  
 senting the Slavery, that is, both the *Ignominy* and the *Drudgery*, which Sinners sub-  
 mit themselves to, by giving themselves up to the Service of Satan, and looking upon  
 his Temptations not as the *Assaults* of an *Adversary*, which are to be resisted, but as  
 the *Commands* of a *Master*, which are to be obey'd ; for of whom a Man is overcome, of 2 Pet. 2.  
 the same is he brought in bondage ; as all 19.  
 those are who are the *Servants of Corruption*.

What! Is the Devil a Master good enough for a Soul that has God for its Maker ? Is *feeding Swine*, making provision for the *Flesh*, to fulfill the Lusts thereof,  
 Work

Serm. I. Work good enough for a Soul that is capable of glorifying and enjoying God? Is *Huiks*, the Food of Swine, proper Provision for a Soul that's capable of being feasted with *Angels Food*? What a Disparagement is it to a Soul to *serve its Enemies*; that tyrannize over it, and seek its Ruin, especially since if it had any spark of Honour left in it, it might by Divine Grace easily and certainly not only *regain a glorious Liberty* from them, but *gain a more glorious Victory over them*! O that the sounding of the *Jubilee Trumpet*, which proclaims the *Release of Captives*, might awaken and animate poor enslav'd Souls, to think their own *Liberty* from *Satan's Yoke* worth *struggling for*, and to exert themselves accordingly. Let them apply to their own Case what God by the Prophet

Isa. 52. 1. *saith to the Jews in Babylon, Awake, awake, put on thy Strength, O Zion. Put on thy Strength, O Soul, put on a holy Resolution in dependance upon Divine Grace, no longer to be rul'd by a base Lust, and led captive by Satan; throw away the Rags of thy Slavery, and put on thy beautiful Garments; be bold, and appear great; for if thou wilt but take Christ for thy Redeemer and Ruler, and give up thy self entirely to him, he will undertake that henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean, that have no right to rule thee, but a design to ruin thee; Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the Law, but under Grace.*



*Grace.* And therefore, as it follows there, *Serm. I.*  
*shake thy self from the Dust, the Dust of*   
 the Earth, Dirt it should rather be call'd,  
 that *Dust* into which by Sin thou art not  
 only fallen, but in a manner *turn'd*; for  
*Dust* thou art, earthly and carnal and cor-  
 rupt thou art, *shake thy self* from that, and  
*arise*, and *sit down*, to consider what thou  
 hast to do, and resolve to *loose thy self from*  
*the bands of thy Neck, O captive Daughter of*  
*Zion*: Despise not thy self, despise not thy  
 own Soul any longer by a sneaking sub-  
 mission to the Tyranny of Satan, but reach  
 out to, and take not up short of the *glorious*  
*Liberty of God's Children.*

2. Those abuse their own Souls that de-  
 file them with the *Pollutions of Sin*; that  
 having devoted themselves to the conduct  
 of the *Unclean Spirit*, are *unclean* like him,  
 and work *all manner of Uncleanness*. All  
 Sin is defiling to the *Mind* and *Conscience*,  
 brings a Blot and Stain upon the Soul,  
 which renders it *odious* in the Eyes of the  
 Holy God, and nauseous, and uneasie too,  
 to itself, whenever it comes to have *spiritual*  
*Senses exercis'd*, renders it unfit to ap-  
 proach to God, and to *eat of the Holy Things*,  
 as Ceremonial Pollutions under the Law  
 did. Now what an abuse is it to the Soul  
 whose Happiness consists in the enjoyment  
 of God and *itself*, to be thus made *offensive*  
 to both; *afraid* of its God, and *asham'd* of  
 itself? What *mean Thoughts* have those of  
 their own Souls that can do them this *In-*  
*dignity*, do them this *Injury*, rather than de-

Serm. I. *deny themselves* the Gratification of a base Lust! Let us therefore shew that we have really a Value for our own Souls, by hastening to make use of the *Water of Purification* provided for them in the Blood of Christ, that the *Conscience* being sprinkled with that, may be *purged from dead Works*, and so restor'd to the service and enjoyment of the Living God, and the Privileges of his Sanctuary, from which we had *debar'd our selves*.

Heb. 9. 14.

But *Fleshy Lusts* are in a particular manner defiling, all the irregular inordinate use of the *Pleasures and Delights of Sense*; these are said to *war against the Soul*, against its *Purity and Peace*, and enjoyment of itself; they are a *Reproach and Disparagement* to the Soul, and therefore we sadly abuse our Souls when we think to *refresh* ourselves by *bathing* in the filthy muddy Streams of Sensual Pleasures, by which we do but *defile* our selves, and, like the Sow, *wallow in the Mire*.

It is the *Honour* of our Souls that they are capable of *Spiritual and Heavenly Pleasures*; of entertaining themselves with *Divine Contemplations and Devout Affections*, the Pleasures of which may be brought near to the Delights of Blessed Spirits above, that are already *enter'd into the Joy of our Lord*. And those maintain the Honour of their Souls that by Faith and Love, by Prayer and Meditation keep up their correspondence with Heaven. But how do those *despise their Souls*, and this Honour

pu:

put upon them, who not only neglect those *Serm. I.*  
*Heavenly Entertainments*, but *disfit* them-  
 selves for them, and exclude themselves  
 from them by the *Guile* they *contract* every  
 day in the use of the *Pleasures of Sense*,  
 which becomne *Pleasures of Sin* to them!

For the Soul to be thrown from its *Rest*  
*in God*, where only it can find true *Rest*,  
 to be shut out from its *Communion* with  
 God, to be *put to Confusion* in its approaches  
 to God, and made uneasy to itself, is to  
 have a great deal of *Wrong* done it, and a  
 great deal of *Contempt* put upon it: And  
 all this they do to *their own Souls* who go  
 a *whoring* after their own *Inventions*, and  
 so are *defiled with their own Works*, with *Psal. 106*  
 their own *Ways*. 39.

3. Those abuse their own Souls that *de-*  
*ceive them with Lies and Falshoods*; those  
 certainly *put a Contempt* upon them that  
*put a Cheat* upon them, and *delude* them  
 with *Flatteries* to act against their own  
 true Interest. A Man justly reckons him-  
 self *affronted*, and *resents* it accordingly,  
 who is *impos'd* upon with *Sham* and *Ban-*  
*ter*; 'tis a *Reflection* upon his *Understan-*  
*ding*, as if he were not able to *discern* the  
*Fraud*, as well as a *Wrong* to his Interests,  
 which are prejudic'd by it: And yet per-  
 haps he is doing the same thing to his own  
 Soul. Taking advantage of its *Credulity* in  
 favour of itself, he not only suffers it to  
 persist in its *Mistakes*, and guards against  
 the rectifying of them, but doth all he can  
 to *ripen* and *confirm* them.

Serm. I. How many Cheats do People put upon  
 their own Souls, which will turn at last to  
 their own Ruin, for *Self-flatterers* and *Self-  
 deceivers* will prove in the end to have been  
*Self-destroyers*. How do they make them-  
 selves believe the strangest and grossest Ab-  
 surdities, and proceed upon them as if they  
 were undoubted Truths! There's none  
 bad, but they are so upon some *bad Prin-  
 ciple*, which, if it were true, would bear  
 them out; but it is a *strong Delusion*. The  
 wicked Heart is a *deceived Heart*, that turns  
 Men aside; and none perish, but it is with  
 a *Lye in their right Hand*. And it is with  
*Lying Vanities* that they are gull'd who  
 forsake their own Mercies. They that mock  
 God, and think to put a Cheat upon him,  
 do but deceive themselves, and put a damn-  
 ing Cheat upon their own Souls.

When the Word of God, which is a  
*Discerner of the Thoughts*, tells us what Sin-  
 ners say in their Hearts; or, as sometimes  
 it is in the Original, say to their Hearts, we  
 may from thence infer what Sights they  
 put upon their own Souls, and how they  
 abuse them. The Fool faceth down his  
 Conscience with this, That there is no God;  
 or if there be, he may go on securely in his  
 wicked way, for the Lord hath forsaken the  
 Earth; He hath forgotten, he hides his Face,  
 and will not require it. The Lord shall not  
 see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard.  
 Did ever any Man banter another as Sin-  
 ners banter their own Souls, run them down  
 with



with Assurance, and beguile 'em with Fraud Serm. I.  
and Artifice?

When the Soul begins to be afraid of the Wrath of God, and to think of fleeing from it by Repentance, 'tis abus'd with this Suggestion, that there is no Danger: as God is not so strict in his Demands, so he is not so severe in his Punishments as the Scripture makes him to be. God hath indeed said, *There is no Peace to the Wicked*; but when the Sinner comes to apply it to himself, he tells his own Soul, *I shall have Peace, tho' I go on to walk in the way of my Heart, and to add Drunkenness to Thirst*. He saith to his Heart, *I shall not be moved, for I shall never be in adversity*. He is drawn into an Opinion, and lull'd asleep with it, that Heaven is a Fool's Paradise, and Hell is but a Bugbear to frighten Children, and therefore it is taught to mock at Fear, and not to be affrighted, and not to believe that it is the Sound of the Trumpet. Dent. 29. 19. Psa. 10. 6.

They that flatter themselves with a Conceit that the external Professions and Performances of Religion will serve to bear them out, and bring them off, in the Judgment of the Great Day, tho' their Spirit and Conversation be never so disagreeable, give the Lye to their own Consciences, and tell a Lye to them, and in both abuse and despise their own Souls. Thus the Apostle tells us, That he who only seems to be religious, and is not so really, deceives his own Heart, seduceth it, misleads it,

Serm. I. and so *abuseth* it; and, that they who are  
 Jam. 1. 22, 26. *bearers of the Word* only, and not *doers*, do  
 but *deceive themselves*; they *put a Fallacy*  
 or *false reasoning* upon themselves, and not  
 in a small matter which one may safely  
*make a Jest of*, but in a matter of the great-  
 est consequence, which every Man is con-  
 cern'd to be in good earnest about.

Let us therefore *do this Justice* to our  
 own Souls, and *put this Respect* upon them,  
 to *tell them the Truth*: Let one Faculty  
*deal faithfully* with another; for if they  
*act separately*, it will be to the ruin of the  
*whole*. Let the Understanding be *true* to  
 the Conscience in *informing* it right concern-  
 ing Truth and Falshood, Good and Evil;  
 and then let the Conscience be *true* to the  
 Soul in applying this, otherwise we *put a*  
*Contempt* upon our own Souls.

4. Those abuse their own Souls that *dis-*  
*tract and disquiet* them with *inordinate*  
*Cares and Griefs* about *this World*, and the  
*things of it*. As those *despise* their Souls  
 that *wallow in the mire* of Sensual Pleasures,  
 so do they who make them *work* in the  
*Mines*, and *tug at the Oar* of worldly Pur-  
 suits; that *rise up early*, and *sit up late*, and  
*eat the Bread of Sorrows* in the Business of  
 Psa. 127. 2 *this World*; that are *careful and cumber'd*  
*about many things*, and have their Hearts  
*burthen'd* and quite *overcharg'd* with an  
 anxious Sollicitude not only *what they shall*  
*eat and drink*, but *what they shall do to*  
*get Estates* and grow great in the World.

It is our Duty to labour, working with our **Serm. I.**  
*Hands the thing that is good.* It is our Sen-  
 tence to eat our Bread in the Sweat of our  
 Faces; but it is our Sin and Folly, and an  
 Abuse to our own Souls, if all our days we **Eccl. 5. 17.**  
 eat in Sorrows and Darkneß, always in fear  
 of losing what we have, and always in care  
 to make it more, to lay House to House, and  
 Field to Field, with an insatiable and bound-  
 less Desire. If we be hurried hither and  
 thither with the Cares of this World; if  
 our Souls be put upon the Rack, always  
 to the stretch in pursuit of lying Vanities; if  
 we be of doubtful mind, live in careful su- **Isa. 5. 8.**  
 spence; if we hover as Meteors in the Air,  
 (so the word signifies) so that we have no  
 Rest, or Enjoyment of ourselves, we abuse  
 our own Souls. **Luk. 12. 29**

It is the Honour of our Souls that they  
 are made capable of working for the Glory  
 of God, and the securing of Eternal Life;  
 of working for another World, in prepara-  
 tion for it, working out our own Salvation;  
 and of working with another World, in con-  
 cert with it; of doing the Will of God as the  
 Angels do it that are in Heaven. What a  
 Disparagement then is it to these Souls to  
 make them Slaves and Drudges to the World,  
 and to keep all their Faculties employ'd in  
 the Work of the Beasts that perish, while  
 those high and noble Services for which they  
 were design'd are last and least thought of!  
 Covetous Worldlings are said to load them- **Heb. 2. 6.**  
 selves with thick Clay, and with a continual  
 Perplexity about it; such perfect Pack-  
 horses

Serm. I. horses do they make of their Souls, and so fast do they chain them to this Earth, when they should be mounting up with Wings like Eagles Heaven-wards.

Let us therefore maintain the Dignity of our own Souls, by *disentangling* them from the World, and the Cares of it, and managing ourselves with a holy Indifferency as to those things, *rejoycing as tho' we rejoyced not, and weeping as tho' we wept not,* and letting our Souls dwell at ease, in an Assurance of the Wisdom and Goodness of the Divine Providence working all for our Good at last, and putting it out of the power of any Worldly Cross or Disappointment to disturb us in that Repose. This is to treat our Souls *respectfully*, and as they ought to be treated, *reserving* them for the Employments that *become* them, and that they are *fitted* for. Let us think it below us to fill our Heads with *Contrivances* about those things which, when we have compass'd them, we cannot fill our Hearts with the enjoyment of them; nor suffer the losing of that to be *Vexation of Spirit* to us, the having of which is but *Vanity*, and no *Satisfaction of Spirit*.

5. Those abuse their own Souls that divide them a Portion of the things of this World, and put them off with these things. As the Soul is abus'd by an inordinate covering and pursuing of the World, so it is abus'd by an inordinate Complacency and Repose in the World; for tho' that may give it a present *Business*, and so seem to befriend it,



it, yet it cuts it off from its *true Happiness*, *Serm. I.*  
and lays a foundation for an *eternal Uneasiness*.

Those know how to value their own Souls, that can be *content with a little of this World* for their *Passage*, because there is *better in Reserve*; but those greatly undervalue them, that could be *content with it all* for their *Inheritance and Home*.

It is the Honour of the Soul, that its *Original and Alliance is Heavenly*: It stands in relation to the *upper World*, and therefore it is a *debasement* to it to let it take up with the things of this World for its *Felicity*, which can neither suit its *Capacities*, nor satisfy its *vast Desires*. This is excellently express'd by Mr. George Herbert:

*If Souls be made of Earthly Mold,*

*Let them love Gold;*

*If born on high,*

*Let them unto their Kindred fly:*

*For they can never be at rest*

*Till they regain their ancient Nest.*

It is the Honour of the Soul, that it is *Spiritual*, and is capable of *Spiritual Enjoyments*, *Spiritual Riches*: Those therefore put a *Slight* upon them that think the *Entertainments of Sense*, which we have in common with the *Brutes*, are sufficient to make them happy, and can call them *their Good things*. A Father cannot more shew

Luk. 16. 25.

Serm. I. vilely fallen out with, than in making his Will to *cut him off* with Twelve-pence, who otherwise was entitled to a Child's Part of a great Estate: Yet much greater is the *disproportion* between the Happiness which the Souls of Men are *born to*, and that which the greatest part of Men foolishly *take up with*, as *their Reward*, as *their Consolation*, as *their All*, and which therefore they shall justly be *put off with*: *Didst not thou agree with me for a Penny?* And therefore *so shall thy Doom be*.

It is the Honour of the Soul that it is *Immortal*, is so in its Duration, and has something in its Constitution which, if it were not *blinded* and *byass'd* by the World and the Flesh, would aspire after *immortal Blessedness*; *Non est Mortale quod optat Immortale petit*.---- How do they then *dishonour* their own Souls who take up a Rest and Home for them in those things that will not *last so long as they must last*, that must be very shortly either *buried in our Graves*, or *left to our Heirs*, and will not go with us to the Judgment, nor stand us in any stead in the Soul's state of separation from the Body; that confine their Happiness within the bounds of Time, whereas they are not themselves so *confin'd*, but are hastening into a boundless Eternity! And thus the Soul's *Being* must survive, must eternally survive its *Bliss*, and therefore must of course be *eternally miserable*.

How

How did that rich Man in the Parable Serm. I. despise and abuse his own Soul, who when he had his Barns enlarg'd and fill'd, said to his Soul, *Soul, thou hast much Goods laid up for many Years, 'tis all thine own, and 'tis enough, 'tis thine all, now take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.* If the Man had had the Soul of a Swine, it had been something to talk to it at this rate; but what is this to a Soul that must *this Night be requir'd*, that must this Night remove it *knows not where*, and must leave all these things behind, to it *knows not who*? From his Folly let us all learn this Wisdom for ourselves, this Justice and Kindness to our own Souls, to lay up Treasure for them, not in this World, which we are *hastening from*, but in the other World, which we are *hastening to*.

Luk. 12. 19

Secondly, Those despise their own Souls that hazard them, and lay them open to Danger, as well as those that abuse them, and do them a direct mischief. What we value we are loth to venture the loss of: Those that know how to value their Souls will not endanger their Soul's Lives; yet this is that which multitudes do, without any Regret or Reflection upon their own Folly.

1. Those hazard their Souls that expose them to the Wrath and Curse of God every day by wilful Sin, upon Presumption that after a while they shall repent of their Sin, and it shall be forgiven them, and all shall

Serm. I. be well. Those have very light Thoughts  
 of their own Souls, that can thus venture  
 them in hopes of God's Mercy, when at  
 the same time they bid defiance to his  
 Justice.

'Tis certain every wilful Sin lays us open  
 to the Curse of God, and to the Arrests of his  
 Law; and it is the Soul that is expos'd.  
 As the Sin is the Sin of the Soul, so the  
 Curse it brings upon us is a Curse to the  
 Soul: So 'tis express'd with an Emphasis,  
 Job 31. 30, by wishing a Curse to his Soul,  
 which will destroy it and all its Comforts,  
 as a Curse in the House consumes it with the  
 Timber thereof, and the Stones thereof. A  
 Curse upon the Soul is a penetrating thing,  
 it comes into the Bowels like Water, and like  
 Oil into the Bones. How little account do  
 they make of their Souls that run them up-  
 on this Sword's Point, and tremble not at all  
 at the apprehension of their Danger! They  
 do in effect say, No matter what becomes  
 of them: They are by nature as Children  
 of Disobedience, Children of Wrath, and  
 that Wrath they not only leave abiding on  
 them, but are daily adding to it, and trea-  
 suring up Wrath against the Day of Wrath,  
 not considering what a Deluge of Wrath it  
 will be when this Treasury comes to be  
 broken up, nor what will become of their  
 Souls in that Deluge; 'tis as much as to say  
 they care not what comes of them.

Ps. 109.  
 28.

Joh. 3. 36.

It is true, there is a way of escaping that  
 Wrath, by Repentance and Faith in Christ,  
 but these are God's Gift, and his Work, for  
 those



those that pray for them, not for those that *Serm. I.*  
*presume upon them.* It is but a *Peradventure* whether God will give Repentance,  
 whether the Divine Providence will give  
 space to repent, and whether the Divine  
 Grace will give a Heart to repent, a tender  
 Heart, to those who have thus hardened  
 their Hearts by the Deceitfulness of Sin.  
 Those have certainly little regard to their  
 own Souls, that throw them thus into the  
 Fire of God's Wrath, in hopes of snatching  
 them as Brands out of it, when there's such  
 danger of perishing in it.

But, of all Sinners, none do more impu-  
 dently *avow* and *proclaim* their Contempt of  
 their own Souls so as those do that curse  
 themselves in their Passions or vehement  
 Asseverations; that challenge God Almighty  
 to damn them, nay, and sometimes ex-  
 plain themselves, and challenge him with a  
 horrid Emphasis to damn their Souls: As if  
 they thought their Damnation linger'd and  
 slumber'd too long, they imprecate that  
 which the Devils themselves deprecated,  
 and that is, being tormented before the time.  
 Do they know what Damnation is, what  
 the Damnation of the Soul, is that dare thus  
 run upon God, upon his Neck, upon the thick  
 bosses of his Buckler, and stretch out their  
 Hands against him? *Job 15.*  
*25, 26.* Those make nothing  
 of their own Souls that make nothing of  
 God's Wrath, nor consider what a fearful  
 thing it is for a living Soul, that hates Ho-  
 lineſs, to fall into the hands of a Living God,  
 that hates Sin, and will reckon for it.

2. Those

Serm. I. 2. Those hazard their Souls that *em-  
 barque them in a false and deceitful bottom,*  
 and in that venture them into the vast Ocean of Eternity. We have a House to build for our Souls, for them to *retire to and repose in* when a Storm comes, when the Night comes: Now if we build this House *upon the Sand* when there is a Rock provided for us to *build it upon*, 'tis a sign we *despise our own Souls*, and think any thing will serve to be a Security for them; As it is a sign a Man makes small account of his Money when he puts it out upon very slender Security, and cares not who he trusts with it, nor what hands he lodgeth it in.

'Tis a great thing (my Brethren) to *venture into another World*, to be brought to Judgment, and to have our everlasting state *determin'd by an irreversible Sentence*: And it concerns us all seriously to consider what Hope we have that we shall *come off well* in that Day, and what Ground we have for that Hope: Whether it be a Hope that will not make us *asham'd*. You are baptiz'd, you are call'd Christians, you make a visible Profession of Religion, a *passable*, perhaps a *plausible* one; you have a *Form of Godlineß*, and perhaps joyn yourselves with those that are most strict and serious; And this you think will be a good Security to you for the Favour of God, and the Happiness of Heaven, tho' you are Strangers to the *Power of Godlineß*, and are under the dominion of the *World* and the *Flesh*. 'Tis a sign you know not the Worth of your  
 Souls,

Souls, when you dare venture them thus *Serm. I.*  
upon that which will not bear their   
weight.

Those *despise their Souls* that can send them to God's Bar with no other Plea in their Hands but that, *We are Abraham's Seed*; or that, *I am rich, I have found me out Substance*: in all my Labours they shall find none Iniquity in me, that were sin. Or *Hof. 12, 8.*  
that, *We have eaten and drank in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets*; or that, *The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are we*, tho' they have no Evidence at all for them that they love God, or believe in Christ, or repent of their sins, or that they are sanctified by the Grace of God. They would not bring a Cause to Man's Bar supported with no better Pleas, that will certainly be over-ru'd; nor venture a rich Cargo in an old rotten Vessel, that a thousand to one founders at Sea.

Let us therefore shew the Esteem we have for our own Souls, by building upon a firm Foundation, and making sure Work for them, and preparing that for their removal into another World which will stand them in stead, and which they may triumph in. Let us not think it enough, when we die, to say, that we Commit our Souls into the Hands of Almighty God, and so cry, *Lord Jesus receive my Spirit*; but let us make it the Care and Business of our Lives to prepare our Souls, and get them made meet to be committed into the Hands of God and Christ, and so be welcom'd, that it may not be

Serm. I. be said to them, *Depart, I know you not:*  
 ~~~~~ These are not Souls prepar'd for Heaven,  
 and therefore Heaven was not prepar'd for
 them. ---- Let not us run a *Risque* in the
 Concerns of our Souls, but press after that
 Assurance which blessed Paul had attain'd
 when he said, *I know whom I have believed,*
 whom I have trusted with this precious
 Soul of mine, that *Great Trust* which I have
 lodg'd in the Hands of the *Great Trustee,*
 and *He is able to keep that which I have sub-*
 mitted to his Conduct, and then committed
 to his Care, *against that day.*

2 Tim. I.
12.

3. Those hazard their Souls that engage
 them as a Pawn for the World, and the Gains
 of it. They are aiming at great things
 here below, they *will be rich*, for they think
 they *must be rich*, or they cannot be happy.
 And this Mistake makes way for a thousand
 more. They are *in haste to be rich*, and
 are told, that they that are so *cannot be in-*
 nocent; yet they will hazard their *Innocen-*
 cy, and with it all the Comfort and Happi-
 ness of their Souls, rather than not be *rich*;
 than not be *quickly rich*. Contrary to the
 Judgment of Christ, they think themselves
 profited if they gain the World, tho' they
 should lose their Souls at last by it.

Prov. 28.
20.

Here's a Bargain to be made, some
 Worldly Design to be compass'd, which with
 the help of a *Lye*, of a *Fraud*, of a *false*
Oath, may bring home a great deal of
Worldly Advantage: They cannot but own
 that such ill Practices are highly dangerous
 to their Souls, that they run a great Hazard
 by

by them. Natural Conscience at first Serm.I. startles at such things, but it is for the getting of Money, a *present* Gain, and which they think is *certain*, and not *lose-able*. The Loss of the Soul is *future*, and they are willing to think it either *uncertain* or *retrievable*, and therefore they resolve to *run the hazard*; they flatter themselves with Hopes that they may *gain the World* and *save their Souls* too: However, if they can but *gain the World*, let the worst come to the worst, if they do *lose their Souls*, they shall fare as well as their Neighbours; and if *they alone must bear it*, they will bear it as well as they can. Now this is *making light* of the Soul indeed, to hazard its eternal Bliss for an inconsiderable Trifle of this Worlds Weakth, and then to turn it off with a Jest, *If I perish, I perish*, and there's an end of it: No, there is *not an end of it*, for it is an *everlasting* Destruction; and those who run this venture will see their Folly when 'tis too late, and will be taught by the *loss of their Souls* to know the *worth of them*, which they had better have consider'd in time.

How ready are many vain People to *pawn* their Souls for the truth of every idle word they speak; *upon my Soul* it is so. Verily these *make light* of their Souls indeed, that will venture them upon any the most trifling occasion. Dost thou know what thou pawnest, Man, and what the value of it is? Thou wouldst not be so free of a *precious Stone*, if thou hadst it, as thou art of a *precious Soul*. Those *play high*, that whether

Serm. 1. in jest or earnest, *stake their Souls*, and do not consider what a subtil Gamester the Devil is, that Souls are the Prize he aims at; and that it is them he *lies in wait to deceive*, and so to *devour*: And if we be so foolish as to *hazard* their Ruin, let him alone to *make sure their Ruin*.

Let us therefore make it appear we do not *despise our own Souls*, by taking heed to them, and *keeping them diligently*, keeping them out of harms way, keeping them *that the Wicked one toucheth them not*; for there is danger, lest if he *touch*, he *take*. Let us avoid all Occasions of Sin, and Temptations to it, all Appearances of Evil, and Approaches towards it, and take heed of a *bold Adventure* in any case wherein the Soul is concern'd, for fear of the worst. In things of *value*, and that are our *All*, its *good to be sure*, and Folly to *run a hazard*; to hazard a Soul for that for which a Man would be loth to hazard his Life.

1 Joh. 5.
18.

Thirdly, Those despise their own Souls that *neglect them*, and tho' they do not, or think they do not do themselves and their own Souls any Harm, yet are not at any care to *do them the Good* they should do them. They think it's well enough if they do not wilfully *destroy* their Souls, tho' nothing is done towards the *Salvation* of them; whereas *starving* the Child is as surely the murder of it as *poisoning* it. Those certainly despise their own Souls that make no Provision for them.

1. That

I. That take no care to get *the Wounds* Sermon I.
of their Souls heal'd. Sin is a *Wound to the*
Soul, a bleeding killing Wound, a *Wound*
and Dishonour : Jesus Christ has made Pro-
 vision for the Cure of this Wound, there
 is *balm in Gilead*, and he himself is the
Physician there ; by *his Stripes* we may be
healed ; but in vain doth the Physician do
his part in prescribing, if the Patient will
 not do *his* in *observing* the Prescriptions.
 Christ would have healed them, but they
 would not be healed ; and so as David com-
 plains, the *Wounds stink and are corrupt*, Psal. 38.5.
 and all because of the *Sinner's foolishness*.
 They fester, and are in danger of being
gangren'd, because no care is taken to get
 them *dress'd* : And thus the Wound, not look'd
 after in time, proves *fatal*.

Those that take no care to get their *Sins*
pardon'd, and their *Consciences purified*, and
 their *Corruptions mortified*, leave their own
 Souls as the *Priest and Levite* did the
 wounded Man, because (like them) they
 have no value for them ; they care not
 whether they *live* or *die*. They *feel* not
 the Pain of their Wounds in conviction of
 Sin, they *fear* not the consequences of them
 in a dread of Wrath, and so no application
 is made to Christ, no enquiry *what shall I*
do to get my Sin pardon'd ? what method
shall I take to escape the Death they threat-
en me with ? And so the Soul is fill'd with
Wounds and Bruises, and putrifying Sores Isa. 1.6.
 which are not bound up.

'Tis

Serm. I. 'Tis certain, those Fools that make a mock
 at Sin, and make light of that, are charge-
 able with this further instance of Folly,
 they make light of their own Souls, and are
 not at all solicitous what becomes of them.
 By this therefore let us all make it appear
 that we value the Lives of our Souls, by
 enquiring, *wherewith will the Lord be pleas-
 ed?* What shall we do to recover his Fa-
 vour? with a readiness to do any thing;
 to submit to any Operation, to go through
 any Course of Spiritual Physick prescrib'd,
 so that we may not die of our Wounds.
 When we are reprov'd for a Fault, and
 warn'd against it for the future, and are
 call'd to repent of what we have done a-
 miss, if we fly in the Face of the Repro-
 ver, and say, *we care not for his help*, who
 would help us up when we are fallen; it's a
 sign we do not value our own Souls; for we
 would thank any one that would thus offer
 his Service to help to cure a Wound in our
 Bodies; or if we had mis'd our way,
 would put us in the Road again. If there-
 fore by falling into Sin we have shew'd our
 neglect of our Souls, by hastning our Re-
 pentance, let us shew our concern for them.

2. Those that take no care to get the
 Wants of their Soul supply'd, despise them.
 The Soul in its own Nature is *craving*, and
 has *Desires* which ought to be satisfy'd; but
 the Soul in its fallen State is *needing*, 'tis
 miserably poor, 'tis ready to *perish for Hun-
 ger*, as the Prodigal in the far Country.
 This World has nothing but *Husks* for it:

In

In our Father's House, and there only, there *Serm. I.*
 is Bread enough. Now those have no va-
 lue for themselves that put off their Souls
 with these Husks, and think not of apply-
 ing themselves to the Father of Spirits for
 the Food of Spirits, the Bread of Life.

The Soul wants Knowledge, wants to be
 acquainted with God its Maker, with
 Christ its Redeemer, with the Employments
 'tis brought up to, with the Enjoyments it
 is design'd for, wants to be acquainted with
 the upper World it is akin to, with the fu-
 ture World it is bound for. The useful
 Knowledge of these things will not be got
 without Care and Pains. Now those that
 will rather let their own Souls be destroy'd
 for lack of Knowledge, than take that Care and
 Pains, shew what a small account they
 make of them. They are in care to fur-
 nish themselves with that Knowledge which
 is necessary to their getting a Livelihood in
 this World, but not that which is necessary
 to their serving, glorifying, and enjoying
 God; and so in the greatness of their Folly
 wander endlessly.

The Soul wants to have communion with
 God, 'tis tir'd with the Pursuits of the
 World, and surfeited with its Pleasures,
 and longs to have Fellowship with its own
 Relations, to associate with those of its own
 Kind, to have a Correspondence with Hea-
 ven, wants to hear thence, and to send thi-
 ther; there is a way appointed for such an
 intercourse as this, which would be its Life
 and Joy; but Holy Ordinances, by which it
 is

Serm. I. is to be kept up and maintain'd, are neglected, and not attended on at all, or not duly attended to: The great Things of God's Law and Gospel are accounted as a *strange thing*: Prayer, by which the supply of our Soul's Wants should be fetch'd in from the fulness which is in Jesus Christ, is either omitted or sinks into a Formality; and in all this a Contempt is put upon the Soul, as if it were not worth making provision for.

3. Those that take no care to get the *Watch over their own Souls kept up*, despise them. There ought to be a constant Guard upon our own Spirits, a jealous Eye, and a careful Hand upon them, that the first risings of Corruption in them may be subdu'd and mortify'd, stifled and suppress'd, and the first risings of any good Affections in them cherish'd and encourag'd: We must have an Eye upon them, as upon Children at *their Book*, and Servants at *their Work*, to keep them to it: Must have an Eye upon these Jewels in our Hands, that they be not snatch'd from us. *Take heed to thy self, and keep thy Soul diligently.* We are entrusted with these Talents, and charg'd to keep that which is committed to our Trust. And those that know how to value their Souls, will keep them with all diligence, as knowing that out of them, out of Souls well kept, are the Issues of Life.

Deut. 4. 9.

But how many are there that have precious Souls to keep, and never cast an Eye upon them, nor make enquiries concerning them, where they are, or what they are doing,

ing, or what is likely to become of them ; *Serm. I.*
 never retire into their Hearts, or commune
 with them ; there is no Care taken to keep
 out that which is dangerous and prejudicial
 to the Soul's Interests, nor to fetch in or keep
 up that which is necessary, and will be ser-
 viceable to them.

And for want of Watchfulness and Cir-
 cumpection, the Soul soon becomes like
 the Field of the Slothful, and the Vineyard of
 the Man void of Understanding, which when
 the Stone-wall was broken down, was all grown
 over with Thorns, and Nettles cover'd the face
 thereof. There's the Picture of a neglected
 Soul ; 'tis all overgrown with vain and foo-
 lish Thoughts, corrupt and vile Affections,
 like the Ground when it was Cursed, which
 brought forth Thorns and Thistles. By these
 God is dishonour'd, the Soul is disgrac'd, all
 good Fruit is choak'd, and the Earth that
 brings forth these Thorns and Briers is re-
 jected, and is nigh unto Cursing, whose end is
 to be burn'd. 'Tis sad to think how many
 precious Souls, that stand fair for Heaven,
 are ruin'd and undone to all Eternity, thro'
 meer Carelessness.

4. Those that take no care to get the
 Welfare, the Eternal Welfare of their Souls
 secur'd ; they are hastning into a State where
 they must be for ever, either compleatly
 Happy, or compleatly Miserable, and never
 were truly solicitous what they should do to
 escape that Misery, and to lay hold on that
 Happiness : Certainly these despise their own
 Souls, they do not think them worth saving ;
 not

Serm. I. not worth the Jaylor's enquiry, *What must I do to be saved?* or that young Man's, *Good Master, what must I do to inherit Eternal Life?* A thousand Impertinences are enquired after, and the great Concerns of the Soul and Eternity not regarded.

AG. 13.
46.

This Honour God has put upon *the Soul*, that he has not only by its Creation made it capable of Eternal Life, but by its Redemption made it a Candidate for Eternal Life: But those despise this Honour God has put upon them, who neglect *the Great Salvation*, and think it not worth taking any care about, or striving for; they judge themselves unworthy of Eternal Life; as is said of the unbelieving Jews. 'Tis not from a penitent Sense of the Sinfulness of their Souls, but from a proud Contempt of the Capacities of their Souls, which they do not think worth gratifying with that Life, and the Joys and Glories of it. They are not at all solicitous what will become of them in the other World, so that they can but have their Wishes in this World; nor have the Wisdom of the unjust Steward, who took care for a House to be in when he was turn'd out of his Stewardship. It is to be fear'd, that even among those that are called Christians, read the Scriptures, and hear Sermons, there are many who never yet put the Question seriously to themselves, *What will become of me in the other World?* If I should die to Night, *Whither would Death bring me?*

Or

Or if they have ask'd the Question, they Sermon. I. have not pursued it, nor brought it to any issue, but the matter is still as *Uncertain*; and they are content it should be so, and put off the Prosecution of this Enquiry, as *Saladid*, to some more convenient season, they know not when. When they come to be Sick, or come to be Old, then they will begin to think of their Souls and Eternity, and to prepare for another World, when they find they must stay no longer in this. What low Thoughts do these Delays speak of their own Souls, as if their Welfare were to be the last and farthest thing in their Thoughts.

And those that seem to be in earnest in enquiring the way to Heaven, yet perhaps do not like it when they are shew'd it, but fly off from the Bargain when it comes to be struck; as he did that went away sorrowful from Christ, because he had great Possessions. Some Value he had for his Soul, else he had not gone away sorrowful; but he had a greater value for the World, else he had not gone away at all. Those that have a beloved Sin, a *Dalilah*, an *Herodias*, a House of *Rimmon*, which they cannot find in their Hearts to part with, no, not to save their Souls, shew how little they value them: For those that know the Worth of them will be glad to accept of Christ upon his own terms, of Christ upon any terms.

Fourthly,

Serm. I.



Fourthly, Those despise their own Souls, that prefer their Bodies before their Souls. Man is a Creature admirably compos'd of Matter and Spirit, that tho' closely united, have distinct and separate Interests and Capacities: It is the Sinfulness and Misery of our fallen State that the Body has got dominion over the Soul, and the Soul is become carnal, He also is Flesh. It will be the Felicity of our glorified State that the Soul will have the dominion, and the Body itself will become Spiritual: But it is the Test now in this state of Trial and Probation, which of these we will give the Preference to, and maintain the dominion of, the Soul or the Body: Now those may truly be said to despise their own Souls comparatively, that prefer their Bodies before them, and allow them their principal Cares.

1. Those that employ their Souls only to serve their Bodies, and make provision for them, do in effect despise their own Souls. The Body was made to serve the Soul, in serving God, and when it is kept so employ'd, it is a Temple of the Holy Ghost, and upon that account truly Honourable: But if instead of that, the Soul be made, to serve the Body in serving the World, and all its noble Powers are kept at constant work to provide for the gratification of the Body and its Appetites, this is a great Contempt put upon the Soul.

Many

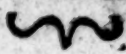
Many People *live* as if they had Bodies Serm. I.
only to *take care of*, and not Souls; or as if
the reasonable Soul were intended only to
forecast for the Sensitive one; and Man had
no other Prerogative above the Beasts, but
that with the use of his Reason he is capa-
ble to *screw up* the Delights of Sense to a
greater degree of Pleasurableness, and make
them more nice and delicate; to improve
by Art the Gifts of Nature, which the infe-
rior Creatures are content to *take* as they
find them; which, after all, doth but make
the Desires of Sense *the more humorsom*, and
consequently the Delights of Sense *the less*
pleasing.

But what a Disparagement is this to a
Rational Soul to be wholly taken up in such
sordid Employments, and to be made a per-
fect Drudge to the Body; as if we had Souls
given us for no other end but to keep our
Bodies from putrifying; and the Powers of
Reason serv'd for no other purpose, but to
be Caterers for the Desires of Sense! This
is that *fore Evil* which Solomon saw under
the Sun, as an Error, the *Servant on Horse-*
back, and the *Prince* attending as a *Servant* Eccl. 10.5;
or *Lacquey* to him. 6, 7. When the Wits are
set on work to *invent* Satisfactions for the
Appetites and Passions and the Intellectual
Powers, which should be employ'd in the
noblest Speculations, and the most needful
Conduct of the Heart and Life, are em-
ploy'd in the *meanest* Projects, here is a Soul
despis'd, and making itself truly despicable.

Serm. I. 2. Those that *injure their Souls to please their Bodies*, comparatively despise their own Souls, and shew they do not value them as they ought.

(1) Those do so that *indulge the Ease of the Flesh to the Souls Loss and Detriment*, that to spare a little Pains to the Body, come short of great Advantages to the Soul, which it might gain to itself either here or hereafter. The *Sluggard* that *will not Plow by reason of Cold*, and therefore has nothing to gather in at *Harvest*, but is forc'd to beg in *Winter*, prefer'd his present Ease before his future Benefit: So do they who, by *observing the Winds and Clouds*, are hinder'd from *sowing and reaping*; and such is the incogitancy of those, who to save a little Labour of the Body, lose the Benefit of the means of Grace for their Souls: This will be found very *ill Husbandry* at last, when Profit and Loss come to be compar'd.

(2) Those do so that *indulge the Appetite of the Flesh to the Soul's Hurt and Damage*; who not only lose the Good their Souls might reap, because they cannot find in their Hearts to *exert themselves*, but involve themselves in a great deal of Mischiefe, because they cannot find in their Hearts to *deny themselves*, and to cross the cravings of the Flesh. The Sensual Appetite is apt to be carry'd out inordinately towards Excesses, and as far as it is gratified, the Soul is prejudic'd by it, *the Heart is overcharg'd with Surfeiting and Drunkenness*, and render'd unfit for Heavenly Converse and Pursuits: And

And therefore those manifestly prefer their **Serm. I.**
Bodies above their Souls, that as Solomon 
speaks, are given to Appetite, and have not
learn'd to put a Knife to their Throat.

Prov. 23.
1, 2.

The Israelites in the Wilderness coveted
Quails, they could not live without Flesh,
and God gave them their Request; but at
the same time he sent Leanness into their
Souls. He withdrew his Grace from them, **Psal. 106.**
and those Comforts which us'd to make their **15.**
Souls as a water'd Garden. Those do not
know how to value their own Souls who
can be content to have them starv'd and
made lean, so that their Bodies may be
feasted and fatted, and fed to the full.

There is no Sin that doth more imme-
diately prejudice the Soul to please the Bo-
dy, than Drunkenness doth, for it deprives
Men for the time of the use of their Rea-
son, and profanes that Crown, that Glory of
the Humane Nature, by casting it to the
Ground, and levelling Men with the Beasts
that perish. The Understanding of the Man
is darkned when he is drunk, his Memory in
a manner lost, his Thoughts in a tumult, and
his Passions have got clear of the Govern-
ment of Reason, and are all in an uproar;
his Speech bewrays him to be a Fool.

*The Drunkard forfeits Man, and doth divest
All Worldly Right, save what he has by Beast.*
Herbert.

Can a Man put a greater Contempt than
this upon his own Soul, thus to trample it
in

Serm. I. in the Dirt, not once or twice, but *often*; to make a practise of it, as many do. And besides the *present Injury* that it doth to *Reason*, which a Nights sleep doth in some measure recover; it doth a *lasting Mischief* to *Conscience* and Religion; it *debauches* the Mind, *hardens* the Heart and *stupifies* it; it *alienates* the Affections from Divine Things, and has been the Ruin of many that were well Educated, and began well. Drunkards, to gratify the *Spark in the Throat*, as they call it, *extinguish* the *Fire from Heaven*, the Fire of Holy Love and Devotion, and *kindle* a Fire of vile Affections there, which if infinite Mercy do not prevent, will *burn to the lowest Hell*.

3. Those that *endanger their Souls to secure their Bodies*, despise their own Souls, and give the preference to the inferiour part of them. It is natural to us when the Head is struck at, to venture the right Hand for its Preservation, which tho' *dear* is not *so dear*. When at any time we are brought to this *Dilemma* that there is no way of avoiding the *Sin of the Soul* but by *suffering in the Body*, and no way of avoiding *suffering in the Body* but by the *Sin of the Soul*, then it will appear which we give the Preference to, the *Soul* or the *Body*: They are both dear we will suppose, but then it will be seen which is most dear.

Those that will *deny Christ*, rather than *die for him*, and to escape the *Fiery Furnace* will worship the *Golden Image*, plainly shew that they *despise their own Souls*; for they will

will rather throw away their Comforts in Serm. I.
 God and their Hopes of Heaven, than their
 Hopes and Comforts in this World. When
 the Storm of *Persecution* ariseth because of
 the Word, they will rather make Shipwrack
 of Faith and of a good Conscience, than of the
 World and of a good Estate; and contrary
 to the common Dictates of Reason, will ra-
 ther cast themselves over-board than their
 Wares: And tho' all that a Man has he will
 give for his Life, but little of what they
 have will they give for the Life of their
 Souls. Our Lord Jesus has expressly told
 us, that he that will save his Life by disown-
 ing Christ, the same shall lose it; by saving
 a transient Satisfaction he shall lose an eter-
 nal Felicity; but whosoever is willing to lose
 his Life, shall find it with infinite Advantage
 in eternal Life: But they will not take his
 Word, and therefore chuse Iniquity rather
 than Affliction; a Choice which they will
 certainly repent: 'Twere well if they wou'd
 repent in time.

Mat. 16. 25

But let us shew that we value our Souls
 by making Moses's Choice, Rather to suffer
 Affliction with the People of God, than to en-
 joy the Pleasures of Sin for a season; and theirs
 who loved not their Lives to the Death in the
 Cause of Christ; and that of blessed Paul,
 who counted not his Life dear to himself, so
 that he might finish his Course with Joy:
 and let us reckon our Losses for our Religi-
 on abundantly made up, if we do but secure
 the Salvation of the Soul. When that blef-
 sed Martyr Bishop Hooper was urg'd to re-

Heb. 11. 25

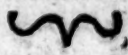
Acts 20. 24

Serm. I. cant, with this Consideration, that *Life is sweet, and Death bitter*: 'Tis true, said he, but *eternal Life is more sweet, and eternal Death more bitter*. This was the Language of one that put a value upon his own Soul; as on the contrary, he that in the like case said, *The Fire is hot, and Nature is frail, and the truth is, I cannot burn*, and therefore deny'd Christ, and turn'd Papist; shew'd that he prefer'd his Body before his Soul, as multitudes do, who will rue it at the last.

For the second thing, I come next briefly to shew the Folly of those who thus despise their own Souls; and really the thing speaks itself; Men cannot be guilty of a greater Absurdity: Their Folly will shortly be made manifest to all Men; and to themselves too when all these things, for the sake of which they slighted their own Souls, are lost and gone, and the Soul that despised itself is for ever abandon'd by its Maker to a miserable Remembrance of its own Folly, in forsaking its own Mercies, which would have put a Crown upon its Hopes, for lying Vanities which put a Cheat upon them.

To shew the Folly of those that despise their own Souls, let us consider only these five things, The Nature of the Soul, and its Nearness to us; The Purchase of the Soul; The Projects that are concerning it, and its Perpetual Duration.

1. Consider the Nature of the Soul, which is too noble, too excellent to be despis'd; they that despise it despise Dominions, and
speak

Speak evil of Dignities. They pursue my *Serm. I.*
Soul, saith *Job*, Chap. 30. 15. The word in 
 the Original signifies my *Principal one*; for
 the Soul is the principal part of us. *Jacob*
 calls it *his Honour*. *David* calls it *his Glo-* Gen. 49. 5.
ry. 'Tis Folly therefore to despise that *Psa. 16. 9.*
 which has such an innate Excellency in it,
 and has so much Honour put upon it. The
 Soul of Man is no despicable thing, and
 therefore they are Fools that despise it.

The Soul is of *Divine Original*; 'twas
 not made of the *Dust*, as the Body was, but
 it was the *Breath of the Almighty*, had the
 Image of God stamp'd upon it, and is the
 Masterpiece of Gods Workmanship in this
 lower World. He that *despiseth the Poor*,
reproacheth his Maker, so doth he that *de-*
spiseth his own Soul, he thereby reflects
 Dishonour upon the *Father of Spirits*; as
 if that work of his Hands which he *rejoyc'd*
in were not worth our regarding.

The Soul is of *inestimable Value*; for its
 Powers are *great and noble*; its Apprehen-
 sions not *stinted* by the Horizon of Sense
 and Time, but reach far beyond it; 'tis
 capable of *knowing* God, and *conversing* with
 him, and of *receiving* a Divine Revelation
 in order thereunto; 'tis capable of being
sanctified by the Spirit and Grace of God,
 and *employ'd* in praising and blessing God:
 Nay, 'tis capable of being *glorified* with
 God, of seeing him as he is, and enjoying
 him to Eternity; and is this a Thing to be
despis'd? The Soul is that *one Talent*
 which they that have received least from
 C 4 their

Serm. I. their Master, are *entrusted with*; its being
 a *Talent* speaks it of value, as doth the
 Doom past upon the slothful Servant that
 did not improve that *one Talent*, tho' he
 was entrusted with no more. The Soul
 is a *Price in the Hand to get Wisdom*, that
 principal thing, which is to be labour'd for
above all gettings.

Self-consciousness is in the Nature of
 the Soul; 'tis capable of *reflecting* upon
 itself, and conversing with itself; *Nosce*
teipsum, Know thy self, was an ancient
 Dictate of Wisdom: And *Self-Ignorance*
 is suppos'd to be a gross Absurdity when
 1 Cor. 13. 5 it is ask'd, *Know ye not your own selves?*
 But those that *despise themselves*, and are
 in no concern about their own Souls, shew
 that they have no Knowledge, no right
 Knowledge of themselves. This Faculty of
 the Soul, which is so much its Honour,
 doth not do its part; the Light that is
 in them is Darknes.

2. Consider *the Nearness of the Soul*. 'Tis
his own Soul that the Sinner *despiseeth*, that
 is, it is *himself*, for the Soul is the Man,
 and what is the Man but a *living Soul*?
 Abstract the Soul as *living*, and the Body
 is a lump of Clay: Abstract the Soul as
rational, and the Man is as *the Beasts that*
perish. Persons in Scripture are oft rec-
 kon'd by *Souls*; for the Body is but the
Shell, the Soul is the *Kernel*.

Now to the *right value* of a thing, it
 must be consider'd not only what it is in
itself, but what Interest we have in it.
 The

The *Loan* of a thing is not so valuable as *Serm. 12*
the *Property*. Now the World is but lent 
us, whatever we have in it, 'tis not to be
call'd *our own*; but our Souls are *our own*;
we brought them into this World, and shall
carry them out. The Soul is call'd the *Dar-* Psa. 35. 17.
ling: In the Original it is *my only One*. We
are entrusted with but *one Soul*, and there-
fore the greater is the *Shame* if we neglect
it, and the greater the *Loss* if we lose it.
Our Souls being our *only Ones*, should be
our *Darlings*, not our *Drudges*; being near
to us, they should be *dear* to us, and our
constant care and concern should be about
them. This is *my Vineyard which is mine*
(such an Emphasis doth the Spouse lay up-
on the Propriety) and therefore should be Cant. 8. 12.
ever before us.

Our Soul is *our own*, for we are entrusted
with it as committed to our charge by him
whose *all Souls are*, to be employ'd in his
Service now, and to be fitted for a Happi-
ness in the Vision and Fruition of him here-
after: And of this Trust we must shortly
give account: *Man, Woman, thou hadst a*
a Soul of thine own, what didst thou do with
it? 'twas lodg'd in thy Hand, where is it?
'Twas to be thy peculiar Care, has it been
so? O what Folly is it to despise our Souls,
when we are so *nearly interested* in them
that we really are *Good* or *Bad*, and it is
with us *Well* or *Ill* according as our Souls
are, or are not well look'd after. The Con-
cerns of our Souls are as our Saviour speaks,
the *ta nuphs*, the things that are *our own*.

Serm. I. The Concerns of the World are the *τὰ ἀλλότρια*, they are *another Mans*; Luk. 16.

12. *Epictetus* spoke much the same when he made the Conduct and Government of our *Appetites* and *Passions*, *Abstine* and *Sustine* to be the *τὰ ἐφ' ἡμῖν*, the *Duty* which is *ours*, but the *Issues* of our *Worldly Affairs* to be the *τὰ ἐκ ἐφ' ἡμῖν* the *Event*, which is *God's*. The keeping of our *Hearts* is *above all Keepings*, and therefore they ought to be kept *with all diligence*, and not to be despis'd.

Pro. 4. 23.

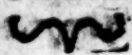
3. Consider the *Purchase* of the *Soul*, and the *Price* that was paid for its *Redemption*. If we despise the *Soul*, we despise that which not only the *All-wise Creator* dignify'd, but which the *All-wise Redeemer* too put yet greater *Honour* upon, and so reflect upon his *Judgment* too. We reckon the *Value* of a thing by that which a *Wise man* will give for it, that knows it, and is under no necessity of purchasing it. Our Lord *Jesus* knew very well what *Souls* were, and had no need of them, was happy without them, and yet gave himself, his own precious

Mat. 20. 28.

Blood to be a *Ransom* for them; ἀντίλυτρον, a *Counter-price*. He made his *Soul* an *Offering* for ours, to teach us how to value them. When God would prove the *Excellency* of his *People*, and his value for them, he mentions this instance of it, *I gave Egypt*

Isa. 43. 3. 4.

for thy *Ransom*, *Ethiopia*, and *Seba* for thee. What a *Demonstration* is it then of the *intrinsic Value* of *Souls*, as well of the *Kindness* he had for them when he gave his

own Son out of his Bosom for them, the *Sermon* Son of his Love, to suffer and die for them. 

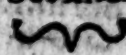
You see how *high* Souls stand in Christ's Book of Rates, and shall they then stand low in ours? As Silver and Gold would not satisfy the Desires of a Soul, nor its Capacities, in *puris ejus naturalibus*, so neither would they satisfy for the Sins of the Soul, if I may so speak, in *impuris ejus naturalibus*. We are not redeemed with corruptible things, but with the Blood of Christ, which is of inestimable Value; nothing less than that would buy them back out of the Hands of Divine Justice, would save them from Ruin, and secure to them their Blessedness: Shall we then despise that which he paid so dear for, and sell that for a mess of Pottage, like profane Esau, which he purchas'd with his own Blood?

And let us further consider, that if Christ paid such a Price for the purchase of our Souls, he will enquire after them, whether we take any care of them or no; as all wise Men do after their Purchases. If we carelessly lose our own Souls, yet Christ will be no loser by it; for if he be not glorify'd by our Souls in their Everlasting Happiness, he will be glorified upon them in their Everlasting Ruin. And if they forget the Rock that formed them, and deny the Lord that bought them, let them know, that as he that formed them will shew them no Favour, so he that bought them will say, Depart from me, I know you not.

Serm. I. 4. Consider the *Projects* that are laid *about* Souls, and what striving there is for them, and for their Love and Service. Nothing makes Men value themselves so much as *being courted*, and *contended about*. Sirs, you are Fools if you *despise your own Souls*, for you cannot imagine what *work* there is *about them*. God and the World, Christ and Satan are *Rivals for the Throne* in them: The Good Spirit is *striving with Men's Souls*, to *sanctify* and *save* them: The Evil Spirit goes about continually seeking to *debauch* and *destroy* them. God cannot have a more *acceptable Present* brought him than your Souls, My Son, *give me thy Heart*; nor Satan a more *acceptable Prey*.

It concerns you then to *look about you*, and to make such a disposition of your own Souls as you are *oblig'd* to make, and as will be for your *true Interest*: It concerns you to *fortify* them against the Assaults of the *worst of their Enemies*, and to *furnish* them for the Service of the *best of their Friends*.

Think what *Projects* the Love of God has to *save* Souls; with what a peculiar Care that God, whose the Worlds are, even a World of Angels, has been pleas'd to concern himself for the World of Mankind, the *World of Souls*. He had thoughts of Love to a Remnant of the *Sons of Men*, of the Souls of Men, before the Worlds were; *was devising Means that his banish'd might not be for ever expelled from him*: He sent his Son to *seek and save* lost Souls; and *saith* himself to the returning Soul, *I am thy*

thy Salvation *: He hath given *his Spirit* to *Serm. I.*
work upon our Spirits, and to *witness with* 
 them : He has appointed his Ministers to * *Psa. 35-3*
watch for your Souls ; their Business is to *win* *Heb. 13.*
Souls : So much is done, so much is doing *17.*
 for Souls Salvation. *Pro. 11. 30.*

Think also what *Projects* the Malice of Satan has to *ruin Souls*, to ruin *your Souls* ; to get to *rule* them, and then he knows he shall *ruin* them. What *Devices*, what *Depths*, what *Wiles* he hath in *hunting for the precious Soul* ! and, how all the Forces of the Powers of Darkness are kept continually in Arms to *war against the Soul* ! The Devil's Agents trade in the *Souls of Men* ; so we find *Rev. 18. 13.* Let us not therefore *despise our own Souls*, but have a careful Eye upon 'em, that they may become *GOD's Children*, and not the Devil's *Slaves*.

5. Consider the *perpetual Duration* of *Souls*, and the *Preparations that are made in the other World to receive them*. Did we but live by that Faith which is the *Substance of things hoped for, and the Evidence of things not seen*, we should value our selves and our own Souls at another rate than commonly we do : Did we look more *before us*, we should look more carefully and concernedly *within us* ; and therefore our Care about our Souls and our Care about *Eternity* are very fitly put together.

Things are valued very much by their Durableness : Gold is therefore the most *valuable Metal*, because most *durable*. Now this is the Great Thing which speaks the
 Worth

Serm. I. Worth of the Soul, and shames those that *despise it*, that it is an *immortal Spirit*, 'tis to *last and live for ever*: 'Tis a Flame that can never be *extinguish'd*; the Spirit of a Man is that *Candle of the Lord* which will never be *blown out*, or *burnt out*; it must survive both the little World when that is turn'd into *Dust and Ashes*, and the great World, when that is shovel'd up in a vast heap of *Ruins*. O! think of *thy Soul*, as that which will not only live and act when 'tis separated from the *Body*, but as that which must be *somewhere for ever, for ever*.

'Tis an awful Consideration when a Child is born, to think here's the Beginning of a Being that must *outlive* all the *Ages of Time*, and whose Life will *run parallel* with the *endless Ages of Eternity*. Here's a Candle lighted that must burn for ever, in Flames either of *Divine Love*, or of *Divine Wrath*. Here's a *Perpetual Motion* set on foot that shall know no stop or period. The *Brute Creatures* are mortal; 'tis not of the particular *Animals*, but of the *universe*, the whole *Creation* in general, that there is said to be that *earnest Expectation*, *Rom. 8. 19*. But Man will be immortal in his *Individuals*; And is such a Soul as this to be despis'd then?

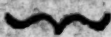
But this is not all; there is everlasting Happiness or everlasting Misery design'd for Souls in the other World, according to their *Character* in this, and according as they are found when they are *fetch'd hence*. Were we all sure that our *immortal Souls* would with-

without fail be *immortally happy* in the other *Serm. I.* World, they ought not to be *despu'd*, but a great deal of Care taken of them, to *prepare* them for that Happiness; but the matter is not so, ——— we are in danger of *falling short* of that Happiness, and *forfeiting* our Title to it, and of being *Castaways* at last, and then we are *undone*.

Think what *Preparations of Wrath* are made to receive *sinful Souls*, the *Tophes* that is *ordain'd of old*, and to which they are *re-serv'd*; the *Day of Wrath*, to which the Wicked shall be brought forth, and you will see yourselves concern'd for your precious Souls, that they may be *sav'd* from that *Wrath to come*, and will stir them up as the Angel did *Lot*, *Escape for thy Life, look not behind thee, stay not in all the Plain, escape to the Mountain, to the holy Mountain, lest thou be consumed*; for Souls that are *despu'd* may e'en be *despair'd of*: Who will pity thy Soul, and snatch it as a Brand out of the Burning, if thou hast thy self no regard to it? Gen. 19. 17.

Think what *Preparations of Glory* are made for *sanctified Souls*; such as *Eye has not seen, nor Ear heard, neither has it enter'd into the Heart of Man to conceive*. Souls must needs be of great value, when there is so much *laid out*, so much *laid up*, to make those Souls truly happy whom the *King of Kings delights to honour*. The *Faculties and Capacities* of the Soul must needs be large, when there goes so much to fill them and bear proportion to them. 1 Cor. 2. 9.

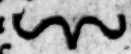
Look

Serm. I. Look therefore upon the World to come,  and then you will see your Souls worth raking care of. How lightly soever some People now think of their *own Souls*, I'm confident they will be of another mind shortly, when either the *Grace of God* opens their Eyes, for one of the first things that a Sinner is *convinc'd* of in order to his conversion, is of the *Worth of his own Soul*; or, when Death having *clos'd* the *Eyes of the Body*, and so *drawn aside* the *interposing Veil of Sense*, opens the *Eyes of the Mind*. When the Soul is *stript*, 'twill see itself to be no such *despicable* thing as it now looks upon itself to be. Well, 'tis good for us alwaies to have such Thoughts of ourselves, and of other things, as we shall have shortly when we *come to ourselves*.

For Application,

First, Let us see and bewail our Folly in having had such low Thoughts of our own Souls, and that we have forgot their Dignity, and put Dishonour upon them. Evidences there are too many, and too plain, of the low Thoughts we have had of our own Souls, while we have thought of our Bodies with a Pride, and Pleasure, and Concern more than was meet; as if we had Bodies only to take care of, and not Souls.

We are apt to take up with a cheap and easie Religion, are still asking how much will serve just to bring us to Heaven, as if we were afraid of doing too much for our own Souls,

Souls, whereas all the danger is of doing Serm.I.
too little. We crowd our Religion into a  Corner, and instead of making a Business of it as it *requires* and *deserves*, make a *by-Business* of it: We are eager in our Worldly Pursuits, but very remiss and indifferent in Holy Duties; and this is a sign we have low Thoughts of our own Souls.

We *converse* little with our own Souls; we do not commune with them, nor *enquire* as we should into their State and Temper; we shew but little Concern about them, as if it were an *indifferent thing* to us whether they were lost or sav'd; we take no care to balance the Accounts of our Souls, but let their Affairs lie at large and unsettled, and this is an Evidence that we *despise our own Souls*; we make ourselves Strangers to them, as if they were not worthy our acquaintance. The Face it may be is *admir'd*, and therefore that is often *look'd in the Glass*, but the Soul is *despu'd*, and therefore never *consider'd*.

We are very *prodigal* of our Time and Opportunities, and take no care to *improve* what we *have*, or to redeem what we *have lost*, and that's an Evidence against us that we have *despu'd our own Souls*, for those that value their Souls value their Time, as knowing that the Eternal Welfare of their Souls depends upon the due Improvement of the Days of Time. What Value do those put upon their Souls that *sleep in Summer* and *play in Harvest*, when they should be *laying in Provision* for their Souls against Winter; that idle away
 Sab-

Serm. I. Sabbath-rime, and the time of the Morning
 and Evening-Sacrifice every day, when they
 should be doing some service to their own
 Souls, or, which is equivalent, to God with
 their Souls?

Well, let us be asham'd of our own Folly
 in this matter; say, *so foolish have I been and
 ignorant; surely I am more brutish than any
 Man.* If Christ had not had more Care for
 our Souls than we ourselves have had, we
 had been in Hell long since. Let us be
 humbled before God for our Contempt of
 that which God has given us such a Charge
 of, and which we ought to have had such a
 Concern for. The matter is so bad, that it is
 not capable of aggravation. We ourselves
 have suffer'd so much by our Neglect, that
 we are *inexcusable* if we be not troubled for
 it, and lay not that to heart which has been
 not only so great a Sin, but so great a Da-
 mage to us, that tho' we have reason to hope
 that upon our Repentance God has forgiven
 it to us, yet we have reason enough not to
 forgive ourselves.

Secondly, Let us learn for the future how
 to put a due Value upon our own Souls; not to
 magnifie ourselves above our Brethren, for
 they also have Understanding as well as we,
 they are not inferiour to us; but to magnifie
 ourselves above the Brutes, so as to scorn in
 any respect to level ourselves with them;
 and to magnifie our Souls above our Bodies,
 so as to be more sollicitous about our spiri-
 tual and eternal Concerns, than about any
 secu-

secular Affairs whatsoever, even those of the Serm.I.
greatest importance.

Let us believe that *one Soul* is more worth than *all the World*; that *this Soul* of ours is so, and that the Gain of all the World, if we could compass it, will not *compensate* or *countervail* the Loss of it; but the *saving* of the Soul will make us abundant Amends for whatever Loss we may sustain in *providing* for our Souls, or *protecting* them.

Let us *value* our Souls as they have relation to God, whose Image they bear, and for whose Glory they were made, to shew forth his Praise, and to qualifie us to be the *Collectors* of his Praises from the inferiour Creatures, and to pay them in to the Treasury above. Let us value them as they have relation to *another World*, which they were made for, and are hastening to; value them as *spiritual*, value them as *immortal*, that they may imploy themselves in spiritual Work, and entertain themselves with spiritual Delights, and may be still *aiming high*, at *Glory*, *Honour*, and *Immortality*, resolv'd not to take up short.

Let us not so *value ourselves* as to think any good Work *below us*, nor any Service we can do to God or our Brethren, tho' it be the *meanest* and most *despu'd*; But let us always so *value ourselves*, as to think any *Evil Work below us*, and a disparagement to us to do an *ill thing*, tho' never so much in *fashion* and *reputation*. Let us think our Souls too good to be made Drudges to the World, and Captives to the Flesh, and Slaves to any
base

Serm. I. base Lust. A Heathen could say, *Major sum & ad majora natus quam ut Corpori sim mancipium.* 'Tis the Great Soul of Man (so it has been fitly call'd by some) that Great Soul of thine, whose Cause we are pleading against thyself, who dost despise it: Shall we gain our point, and prevail with you to think more *highly* and *honourably* of it, and of its noble Powers and Faculties?

Thirdly, Let us make it to appear that we do indeed *Value* our own Souls, and do nothing that looks *despising* or *undervaluing* them. You will all say you value your Souls, but what Proof do you give of it? *Shew it me by your Works*, that you have indeed a Concern for your precious Souls, and prefer 'em before your Bodies, and that you have nothing so much *at heart* as their true Welfare. Let all that converse with you know, by your constant watchfulness over your Words and Ways, that you have a true Respect for your own Souls, and would not do any thing to their prejudice.

Be much in *communing with your own Hearts*, in reflecting upon yourselves, and enquiring what progress you make in the way to Heaven, and how you grow in Grace, what *ground* you get of your Corruptions, and whether you do not *lose ground*: Be aware of Guilt contracted by your Sins of daily Infirmary, and renew your Repentance daily, and the application of the Blood of Christ to your Consciences, to cleanse and purifie them; and thus make it appear that you *value your Souls*. Be

Be afraid of Sin, of every thing that looks *Serm.I.*
like it and leads to it, and stand upon your guard against every Temptation, that you may resist it *at the first*. Check the Risings of Corruption, and look diligently, lest any Root of Bitterness springing up, trouble and defile you. To sin, is to wrong the Soul, and so save that Wrong from being its Ruin there is no other way but to repent, and that is to afflict the Soul to be prick'd to the Heart. To sin, is to make Work for Repentance, that's the best that can come of it; so that if we have any Value for our own Souls, we must shew it by keeping at a distance from Sin, and having not only a Dread of it, but an Antipathy to it.

We must shew that we love our Souls by our diligent and constant Attendance on the Means of Grace; by our keeping up Secret Prayer, and conversing much with the Word of God, without which the Soul cannot prosper, or be in Health. Whatever has a tendency to the Good of our Souls, and the improving of them in Knowledge and Grace and Fitness for Heaven, we must shew our esteem for our Souls by improving them, for the directing and quickening, the strengthening and comforting of our Souls, and the renewing of the Inward Man more and more.

Fourthly, Let us value other things as they have relation to our Souls, and fix our Estimate of them by the Value of our Souls, and stand affected to them accordingly.

Let

Serm. I. Let us value the *Bible* as the *best Book*, because 'tis a *Book for the Soul*; it discovers our Souls to us as a *Glass*, and is a *Discer-*

Heb. 4. 12. *ner of the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart*: It discovers to our Souls the *Way* that leads to their present and future *Happiness*. In the *Scriptures* we think *we have Eternal Life*, *Life for the Soul*. It is the *Excellency* of the *Word of God*, that it *converteth the Soul*,
 Psal. 19. 7, 8. *it enlightens the Mind, it rejoiceth the Heart*; and for this we should value it, because it makes the *Soul wise to Salvation*, and *furnisheth* it for every thing that's good.

Let us value the *Sabbath* as the *Best Day* of the *Week*, because 'tis a *Day for the Soul*, a *Day* that befriends the *Soul's Employments and Enjoyments*, when the *Body rests*, that it may give the *Soul* the more *scope*: And therefore all that have an *Honour* for their own *Souls* will *call the Sabbath a Delight, Holy of the Lord, and Honourable*.

Let us value those as our *best Friends* that are *Friends to our Souls*, and fear those as our *worst Enemies* that are *Enemies to our Souls*; too often we do the contrary. 'Tis certain those that tempt us to *Sin* are *Enemies to our Souls*, that court us to forbidden *Pleasures*, and flatter us in forbidden *Practises*, and tell us we shall have *Peace*, tho' we go on: Yet such as these most *People* are pleased with as *their Friends*, delight in their company, and willingly hearken to all they say. 'Tis as certain those that *reprove us for Sin* are *Friends to our Souls*, that faithfully tell us of our *Faults*, and warn us of our

Dan-

Danger, and call us to our Duty: Yet such *Serm. I.*
 as these most People are displeas'd with as *their Enemies*; so they reckon them be-
 cause they tell them the Truth. Would we
 shew that we value our own Souls, let us learn
 to say to a Tempter, *Get thee behind me,*
Satan, thou speakest as one of the foolish Peo-
ple speak; and to say to a Reprover, *Smite*
me, and it shall be a Kindness; that which
I see not teach thou me.

Let us reckon that *Condition of Life* best
 for us that is best for our Souls; which is
 most free from Temptations, especially to
 the Sin that most easily besets us; and which
 gives us the greatest Advantages for our
 Souls. Our Value for our Souls should re-
 concile us to Afflictions, which tho' grievous
 to the Body, yet by the Grace of God work-
 ing with them, are beneficial to the Soul,
 and yield the peaceable Fruit of Righteousness
 to them that are exercis'd thereby. Blessed is
 the Man whom God chasteneth, tho' it be
 painful and uneasie to the Body, if thereby
 he teach him out of the Law, that will be nou-
 rishing to the Soul. *Psal. 94. 12.*

But above all, let us value our *Lord Jesus*
Christ, as the best Friend that ever poor Souls
 had, that died to redeem and save them.
 The Good Shepherd is the Shepherd and Bi-
 shop of our Souls; a good Shepherd indeed,
 that laid down his Life for our Souls; that
 has provided Food for our Souls, and Heal-
 ing for our Souls, and Rest for our Souls, and
 an Eternal Happiness for our Souls! O let
 our Souls love him, and prize him, and
 study

1 Pet. 2. 25.

Serm. I. study what we shall render to him for his Love. And what shall we render? All the Return he expects is, That since he hath *approv'd himself* such a good Friend to our Souls, we should *apply ourselves* to him accordingly, and make *use* of him. Let me therefore, now in the close, press this upon you with all earnestness; Shew the Value you have, both for *precious Jesus* and for your own *precious Souls*, by trusting him with them; *commit* them to his Care, *submit* them to his Conduct and Government; observe his Orders, follow his *Prescriptions*, and then depend upon his Power and Goodness to do all that for your Souls which their Case calls for. What his Mother said to the Servants at the Marriage in *Cana* is my Charge

Joh. 2. 5. to you; *Whatsoever he saith unto you do it*, tho' displeasing to Flesh and Blood, and then he will *turn Water into Wine* in your Souls, and they shall want for nothing. Trust your Souls with Jesus Christ, and know *whom you have trusted*, even one who is able to keep what we have committed to him against that Day.

Lastly, If we must not despise our own Souls, we must not *despise the Souls of others*; for if ours be precious, so are theirs; and if we ought in love to our own Souls to do all we can for their Salvation, which is the true Self-love, certainly the great Commandment, which binds us to *love our Neighbour as our selves*, binds us to do all we can for the Salvation of the Souls of others, as for the Salvation of our own.

It

It certainly obligeth us to take heed of doing any thing to the *prejudice* of the Souls of others. Those *despise* their Brethrens Souls that care not what *Stumbling-blocks* and *Occasions of Sin* they lay in the way of their Brethren, by their abuse of their Christian Liberty; nor how much they contribute to the *Wickedness of the Wicked*, and to the Grief and Trouble of the Spirits of Good People. Destroy not those Souls that are the *Work of God*, and precious Work; that are the Purchase of Christ, for whom Christ died. Be afraid of doing any thing to discourage those that are weak in their way to Heaven; Christ will not quench the smoking Flax, do not you then. Be tender of tender Consciences, and despise not those who scruple that which you are free in, nor insult over them for their Weakness.

Serm. I.

Rom. 14.

20.

1 Cor. 8.

11.

Nay, it is not enough that we do not put Contempt upon our Brethrens Souls, but we must put a Value upon them, and be ready to do them all the Service we can. All the Children of Men that dwell on the face of all the Earth have precious Souls, Turks and Heathens, Moors and Indians, have so; the Negroes that are bought and sold have so, precious Souls, that are capable of knowing and glorifying and enjoying God, and must be for ever either happy or miserable. O that this were more thought of, and that the Souls of such were not despised as they are! In GOD'S Hand is the Soul of all Mankind, and therefore they should be much upon our Hearts, and we should concern ourselves for

D

them.

Serm. I. them. This is a good Reason why we
 ~~~~~ should *pray for all Men*, that GOD's Name  
 may be sanctified, and his Will done by *all  
 Men on Earth*, as it is done by all Angels in  
 Heaven; because they have all precious  
 Souls, capable of this Honour and Work.  
 Thus we must *honour all Men*.

Pity *self-destroying Sinners*, that are *damning*  
 their own Souls, and, if you can do any  
 thing, have *Compassion upon them, and help*  
*them*. We should justly condemn ourselves,  
 as not having the Value we ought to have  
 for *Human Life*, if we saw a Mad-man ready  
 to cut his own Throat, and did not *interpose*  
 to prevent it; And may we not justly  
 then charge it upon ourselves that we have  
 not the Value we ought to have for *Human*  
*Souls*, when we see wicked People that are  
*beside themselves* running headlong upon the  
 Destruction of their own Souls, and never  
 shew any Concern about it? Observe what  
 an Emphasis the Apostle lays upon this, in  
 the Encouragement he gives us to do our  
 utmost for the *converting of sinners from the*  
 Jam. 5. *Error of their Ways*, That they who do so  
 19, 20. *shall save a Soul from Death*. There's a Soul  
 in the case, and therefore we should think  
 nothing too much to do to help it.

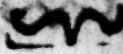
Pity *self-disquieting Saints*, whose Souls  
 are troubled and cast down, who are of a  
 sorrowful Spirit, and go mourning from day  
 to day; put your Souls into their Souls stead,  
 and then, instead of *despising* them, (as those  
 are apt to do that are themselves *wholly at*  
 ease and quiet) try what you can do to  
 strengthen

Job 16. 4.  
 5.



*strengthen them with your Mouth; and let the moving of your Lips be, if possible, to assuage their Grief, and to help them out of that horrible Pit and miry Clay, considering yourselves, lest ye also be tempted.* Serm.I.

Especially have a tender regard to the Souls of those that are *under your Charge*: O do not *despise* them; let it not be an indifferent thing to you whether the Souls of your Children and Servants be sav'd or damn'd; as it plainly is to those that never teach them the *Things that belong to their Peace*, that never pray with them, or for them, nor take any care to restrain them from *doing Evil*, or quicken them to *do well*. They forget how precious their Souls are, and what an Opportunity they have of doing them a Kindness. You would think yourselves barbarous and unjust if you did not provide what is *fitting for their Bodies*, and are you not much more so if you provide not what is *necessary for their Souls*? O that the Souls of your poor Children might be dear to you! They derive Corruption thro' your Loins, and therefore nothing should be wanting on your part to get that hereditary Disease cur'd. You should *travel in Birth again, to see Christ formed in them*. Let it be much more your Care to get them fit to live in *Heaven*, than fit to live in *this World*; to get their Souls *enrich'd* and *establish'd* with Grace, than to raise Estates for 'em: And let this be the top of your Ambition concerning

**Serm. I.** cerning them, that they may be praising  
 God on Earth when you are praising him  
in Heaven; and, that you and they may  
be together for ever praising him. It will  
be so, if you really have the Value you  
ought to have for *their Souls*, and for your  
*own*.

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The

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The FOLLY of  
*Despising our own Ways.*

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PROV. XIX. 16.

— But he that despiseth his Ways  
shall die.

**W**E have here Fair Warning to a Care-  
less World; fair Warning given, O  
that it were but taken! There are Serm. II  
those by whom it is taken: David speaks of  
it with Comfort, that he had taken the Al-  
arms which God's Commands gave, and  
therefore hoped for the Rewards they pro-  
pos'd; By them thy Servant warned: and  
in keeping them there is great Reward. The Psal. 19. 11  
written Word is a Word of Warning:  
The Work of Ministers is to warn Sinners,  
they are set as Watchmen for this purpose,  
and are to bear the Word from God's Mouth,  
and to warn them from him, and in his Name.  
And this is that Warning which they are to  
give from him; O wicked Man! thou shalt  
surely die, if thou go on still in thy Trespases. Ezek. 33. 7, 8.  
O Drunkard! O Swearer! O Sabbath-  
breaker! O Extortioner! O Unclean Per-  
son! whoever thou art, Thou shalt surely die;  
the God of Heaven hath said it, and he will

Serm. II never *unsay* it, nor can all the World gain-  
 say it, *The Soul that sinneth it shall die.*

I am here to day in God's Name to warn you, from this Text, whether you will hear or whether you will forbear, *O thou that despisest thine own Ways, thou shalt die*; if thou persist in this Contumacy and Contempt, *thou shalt surely die.* O that I may give the Warning so as to *deliver my own Soul*, and that you may all receive it so as to *deliver yours!*

There are two things in the Text,

1. The Sinner's *Fall and Ruin*, which we are here warn'd of: *He shall die; the Wages of Sin is Death.* 'Tis that which *Sin, when it is finish'd, brings forth.* 'Tis the Birth from that Conception, the Harvest from that Seedness. The End of all those things is *Death*; that's it which Sin has a direct tendency to.

There is a *Death* that is the *Common Lot* of Mankind; it is *appointed to Men*, to all Men, *once to die*: And that is the *general Effect* of Sin; it came in at the same Door, at the same Time: *By one Man Sin enter'd into the World, and Death by Sin.* And if our Breasts were but as susceptible of *just* Resentments as they are of *unjust* ones, surely Mankind would by consent *dereest* and *abhor* all Sin, because that's the *Mother of all Mischief*; that was it that introduc'd *all that Death* which sullies the World's Beauty, ruffles its Peace, and stains the Pride of all its Glory.

But there is a *Death* which is the *particular Lot* of *impenitent Sinners*; we lie under a Sentence of Death for the breach of the

Ori-



Original Law, but this speaks another Death, **Serm. II**  
a much sorer Condemnation, which is inflicted  
ed for the Contempt of the Remedial Law.

1. It is a *spiritual Death*: An impenitent Soul dies as a Soul can die, it lies under the Wrath and Curse of God, which is *killing* to the Soul, is its Death; it is destitute of *spiritual Life*, and of its Principles and Powers. It is under the dominion of Corruption, which is as *killing* a *Sickness* to the Soul as the Curse of God is a *killing Sentence*. When Christ threatens concerning those that *believe not in him*, that *they shall die in their sins*, or Joh. 8. 24. as it is *V. 21, ἐν τῇ ἀμαρτίᾳ ὑμῶν, in your sin*, in that Sin of *Unbelief*, he means not so much that you shall die the Death of *the Body*, in an unconverted state, but you shall die *spiritually*, in the same sense that we are said to be *dead in Trespasses and Sins*, Eph. 2. 1. Sinners *shall die*, i. e. their Disease shall be *incurable*, and consequently *mortal*; they shall languish of it a while, and die of it at last.

They *shall die*, that is, they shall be cut off from all *Communion with God*, which is the *Life of the Soul*, and from all hope of His *Loving Kindness*, which is *better than Life*. They *shall die*; that is, they shall be dead to God, and to all Good; dead to Christ, as Branches in the Vine that are wither'd, which have no communication with the Root, nor derive any Vertue from it.

This *Spiritual Death* is a thousand times worse than the *Death of the Body*, and more to be *dreaded*. The Body separated from the Soul, which is its Life, is only made a just

**Serm. II** and easie Prey to the *Worms*, which feed sweetly on it; but a Soul separated from God becomes a just and easie Prey to the *Devils* as Tempters, Tormenters, or both. The Death of the Body is not to be call'd *Death* to any but to those that die in their sins, and to them it is follow'd by the *second Death*: To the Saints it is but a *Sleep*, for they die in *Christ*, and the Toil of their Works ceaseth while the Comfort and Rêcompence of 'em remains. Those are dead indeed that are twice dead; the Body dying, and the Soul dead. O dread this *spiritual Death*; Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from this Death, and *Christ shall give thee Light and Life*.

2. It is an *Eternal Death*: This is but the Perfection of the former, the Sinfulness of Man and the Wrath of GOD both immutably fasten'd. He shall die; that is, he shall perish eternally, he shall die the second Death. The learned Mr. Mede observes, that in *Solomon's Proverbs Hell* is call'd the *Congregation of the Dead*, of *Rephaim*, of the *Giants*, so some render it, alluding to the Sinners of the old World, that were cut off by the Deluge, and died together, which was a Figure of the
- Prov. 21. 16. *Eternal Punishment of Sin in Hell*. And he supposeth that *Solomon* has an eye to that future state of Torment, when he saith of the strange and foolish Woman, that her House inclines to Death, and her Paths to the Dead; and, that the Dead are there, and her Guests are in the depths of Hell. Agreeable to which it is here said of the wilful Sinner, that he shall die, he shall die eternally, shall go down
- 2 Pet. 2. 5.  
Prov. 2. 18  
Chap. 10. 18.

to the Congrégation of the Dead and Damn'd. Sermon II.

That Misery which those inevitably fall into to that live and die in their sins, is truly call'd Death, because tho' it is not the extinguishing of their Being, yet, which is equivalent, it is the extinguishing of their Bliss, and *non est vivere sed valere Vita*; they are ever dying, and yet never dead. Death is the most terrible Thing we can conceive, especially Death by exquisite Tortures, when Death itself is courted as *Ease and Release*; and therefore Hell is represented by the most killing Tortures to which that Period is deny'd, because 'tis indeed more terrible than we can conceive: The *Metaphors* are nothing to what the *Thing itself* will be; nothing to what it is represented to us when it is stript of the *Metaphors*: It is *Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish, to the Soul of Man that doth evil*; it is the Wrath of an Immortal God, filling the Conscience of an Immortal Soul, that went out of *this* World unpardon'd and unsanctified, and has in *that* World its Faculties vastly enlarg'd, to receive the Impressions of that Wrath, and to make bitter Reflections upon itself; that has no Delights of Sense to divert the Thoughts of its own Misery with, nor any Hope of ever having Benefit by the *rejected* Saviour, and the *resisted* Sanctifier.

This is no pleasing Subject, nor is it any *Pleasure* to me to dwell upon it, but we dare not baulk it when it comes in our way; I hope you do not desire we should; that you are not of those who would have only *smooth*

Serm. II *things prophesied to you; you had better hear of it than feel it, especially when you hear of it for no other end but that for which the Rich Man in Hell desir'd his five Brethren might have it testified to them, lest they also should come into this Place of Torment. They that blame Ministers for preaching these Terrors of the Lord, and with them perswading Men, who turn it to their Reproach, that they fill their Pulpits with Hell and Damnation, forget how frequently our Lord Jesus preach'd upon this Subject, of being cast into utter Darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth; of the destruction both of Soul and Body in Hell; of the Furnace of Fire into which the Wicked shall be cast; of the Worm that dies not, and the Fire that shall not be quenched, the Everlasting Fire prepar'd for the Devil and his Angels; of those that cannot escape the Damnation of Hell; and many, very many, the like Passages we find in Christ's preaching; such are the Warnings we have receiv'd from his Mouth, and we should be false to our Master, and false to your Souls, if we did not give you this Warning; and we should fall under his Curse, and yours too, for our Unfaithfulness. Give me leave therefore briefly to tell you,*

1. That this *second Death*, of which we give you warning, is a *real thing*, and no *Fancy*. 'Tis undoubtedly true, that there is a State of Misery and Torment in the other World, which will certainly be the Portion of all that live and die ungodly. It is  
not



not the Product of a craz'd or frighted Imagination, nor an Engine of State wherewith to keep the World in awe : No, Sirs, what we tell you concerning the Torments of Hell, as well as concerning the Joys of Heaven, are the *true sayings of God*.—This Branch of God's Wrath is plainly revealed from Heaven against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men. 'Tis so far from being inconsistent with the Justice of God to punish Sin to this degree, that considering the Pomp, Pleasure, and Prosperity of many wicked People in this World, it is necessary to the *maintaining and asserting* of the Divine Justice and Holiness : For considering how Wickedness seems to be *conniv'd at* and *countenanc'd* in this World, how would it appear that God *hates it*, and as a Governor *punisheth it*, if there were not such a Place of Torment reserv'd for it : And therefore the *Day of Wrath* is call'd the *Day of the Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God*. And even *natural Conscience* witnesseth to the Truth of it, when the *Terrors of the Lord set themselves in array* against it. Some have felt such a *Hell within them*, as has been a plain Indication of a *Hell before them*. Serm. II  
w  
Rom. 1. 18.  
Rom. 2. 5.

O that all our Hearts were possess'd with the firm Belief of this Truth that the *Wrath of God abides*, and will eternally abide upon all those who *believe not* in Jesus Christ, and submit not to the Laws of his Holy Religion. The Devil drew our first Parents in to eat the forbidden Fruit, by promising them

Im-

Serm. II Impunity, and facing down the Truth of  
 the Threatning; tho' in it he gave the Lye  
 to eternal Truth. God had said, *In the day  
 ye eat thereof, ye shall surely die*; and has  
 said to us as plainly, *He that believes not  
 shall be damn'd*: Yet as he said then to those  
 who eat of the forbidden Tree, *ye shall  
 not die*, he still saith to those that persist in  
 Unbelief and Impenitency, *ye shall not be  
 damn'd*: And shall we suffer ourselves to be  
 impos'd upon by the same Fallacy, or impu-  
 dent Falshood rather, which was so fatal to  
 our first Parents, and to us in them? Shall  
 we credit the Father of Lies, who seeks our  
 Destruction, rather than the God of Truth,  
 who desires our Welfare?

You that are *Young*, in this Age of *Insidi-  
 lity*, have need to guard against Temptati-  
 ons of *this kind*. Be firmly establish'd in  
 this Truth, and hold it fast. The Revela-  
 tion of it plainly comes from God, and there-  
 fore every Suggestion, how plausible soever  
 that tends to shake your Belief of it, must  
 come from *Satan*, and must be accordingly  
 rejected with abhorrence. Live not a Car-  
 nal, Sensual, Wicked Life, for then you will  
 be tempted to *wish there were no Hell*, and  
 so by degrees to *believe there is none*: But  
 by your Belief of it be driven to Christ, be  
 restrain'd from Sin, and kept in the way of  
 your Duty, and by such good Influence up-  
 on your Hearts and Lives, you will have  
 your Belief of it confirm'd; and it will be  
 so far from being a Terror to you, that it will  
 furnish you with matter of Comfort and  
 Praise,

Praise, to think that through Grace you are *Serm. II*  
*deliver'd from the Wrath to come.* 

2. The second Death, as it is a *real thing*, so it is a *fearful thing*, unconceivably dreadful; for who knows what is the Power of God's Anger, either what he can inflict, or what it is possible for a Soul to suffer; or what a fearful thing it is for a Sinner that has made himself *obnoxious* to God's Justice, and would not *come up to the Terms* of Pardoning-Mercy offer'd, and has made himself *odious* to Gods Holiness, and would not *come under the Power* of sanctifying Grace, offer'd likewise; to *fall into the Hands of the living God* when he comes to take Vengeance, not only for his *injur'd Holiness and Justice*, but (which will add greatly to the account) for his *despis'd Grace and Mercy*?

The Condition of *all those* will no doubt be very *sad and doleful*, who shall be *shut out* from the Vision and Fruition of God in Heaven; as all those will be who are not by the Grace of God *made meet* for it: But it is observable, and 'tis what ought to be observ'd to you that enjoy the Gospel and profess Christianity, that the *Extremities of the Torments of Hell* are always spoken of as the *Portion* of those that either might have had a Place and a Name in the Church of Christ, and *would not*, or have a Place and Name in it, and *do not live up to it*. They are the *Children of the Kingdom*, the unbelieving Jews that shall be *cast into utter Darkness*, who were invited into the Christian Church, but refus'd the Invitation.

Mat. 8. 12.

The

**Serm. II** They are the *Tares* found in the *Field* of the Church; and the *bad Fish* enclos'd by the *Gospel-Net*, that shall be cast into the *Furnace*

*Mat. 13. 42.* of *Fire*. And *Hypocrites*, that shall not escape the *Damnation of Hell*, even those that come to the *Wedding-Feast* without a *Wedding-*

*Mat. 22. 13.* *Garment*. 'Tis he that follows *Christ*, and yet betrays him, whose *Condition* will be so miserable, that it had been better for that

*Mat. 26. 24.* *Man* he had never been born. And they are those who had *Talents*, but bury'd them; who had opportunity of relieving *Christ's Poor*, and shut up the *Bowels of their Compassion* from them, that shall be most severely reckon'd with, So that we for our parts are all concern'd to fear the worst, and with the utmost Diligence to flee from the *Wrath* to come; for if we fall under it (how charitably soever some may be willing to hope concerning those that never enjoy'd the Advantages that we enjoy, nor made the Profession that we make) 'tis certain our *Condemnation* will be more intolerable than that of *Sodom* and *Gomorrab* (so the Judge himself has told us) tho' theirs is no less than the *Vengeance of eternal Fire*.

*Jude 7.*

Let our *Holy Faith* therefore produce a *Holy Fear*, as *Noah's* did, who by Faith being warn'd of a *Deluge* coming, was moved with

*Heb. 11. 7.*

*Fear* to prepare an *Ark*. O that the *Sinners in Sion* might hereby be made afraid, because, of all *Sinners*, it will fare worst with the *Sinners in Sion*! O that *Fearfulness* might surprize the *Hypocrites*, whose *Doom* will be the most fearful; that by this *Fear*

*Sin-*



Sinners may be awaken'd to cast away the *Serm. II*  
 filthy Rags of their Iniquity, and Hypocrites  
 to trust no longer to the *Cloke* of their Hy-  
 pocrisy; that Sinners may become Saints, and  
 Hypocrites sincere: For when we Preach  
 such terrible Doctrin as this, it is not, as we  
 are sometimes told, to frighten you out of  
 your Wits, but to frighten you out of your  
 Sins.

3. This second Death is very near to all  
 that are going on still in their Trespases. If  
 Satan cannot prevail to take away the In-  
 fluence of this Truth upon Mens Minds, by  
 denying the Reality or Eternity of Hell-  
 Torments, or by diminishing the Terror of  
 them, he then endeavours to do it by re-  
 presenting them at a vast distance, that in  
 that View they may appear small and incon-  
 siderable, in comparison with the things that  
 are present and near. When we tell wicked  
 People they shall surely die if they go on in  
 Sin, they are ready to tell us, perhaps it may  
 prove so at last: But the Vision that we see  
 is for many days to come, and we prophesy of  
 the times that are very far off, as the People  
 said to the Prophet. If there be such an  
 evil Day coming, yet they put it as far off  
 from them as they can, and so it makes no  
 impression upon them.

Ezek. 12.  
 27.

And is it so indeed? No certainly; I am  
 to tell thee, Sinner, thou who goest on for-  
 wardly in the way of thine Heart, that there  
 is but a step between thee and this second  
 Death, and it may be a short step, and soon  
 taken. There is but one Life between thee  
 and

Serm. II and Hell, and that's thine own, which perhaps will be shortly at an end : *Behold the Judge standeth before the Door.* As the Saviour of the Saints, tho' he tarry, yet *will come, and will not tarry* ; so the Judgment of Sinners, tho' it seem to *linger, seem to slumber*, yet now of a long time it *lingers not, 2 Pet. 2. 3. it slumbers not.*

It would amaze us if we could see it with our bodily Eyes, but (which is next door to it to a Believer) our Saviour hath set it before us in two Parables, what a sudden change Death makes with a secure *Worldling*, whose Soul is promis'd the Enjoyment of Goods laid up for many Years, and yet is *this Night requir'd* ! Or with a secure *Sensualist*, who fares sumptuously every day, and the next News that is heard of him is, he is dead and in Hell Torments ! *In a moment they go down to the Grave*, from the height of Prosperity to the depth of Misery.

Luk. 16.  
19, 23.

O that the *nearness* of this dreadful Doom might awaken Sinners to a *speedy* Repentance and return to God ! Believe it, Sirs, its not a time to *trifle*, or to be *dilatory*, yet a *little, little while*, and the *Vail* will be *rent*. The days of your *Probation* will be *number'd* and *finish'd*, and you will enter upon this State of *Recompence* and *Retribution*. O that you would bethink yourselves *in time*, now at length in *this your day*, that you would know and consider the things that *belong to your everlasting Peace* ; for tho' they are not yet *hid from your Eyes*, thanks be to God, they are not, yet you know not *how soon they may* ; when

when the Misery that might have been in **Serm. II**  
 time prevented, must be to Eternity *rued*,  
 but cannot to Eternity be *remedy'd*.

Those are very awakening Words of  
 Mr. Baxter's, in a Sermon before the House  
 of Commons, which Dr. Bates quotes in his  
 Sermon at his *Funeral*, and which I shall  
 crave leave to transcribe here. " The  
 " Wretch that is condemn'd to die *to mor-*  
 " *row*, cannot *forget* it; and yet poor Sin-  
 " ners that continually are uncertain to *live*  
 " *an hour*, and certain, speedily to see the  
 " Majesty of the Lord to their unconceive-  
 " able *Joy* or *Terror*, as sure as they now  
 " live on Earth, can *forget* these things for  
 " which they have their Memory, and  
 " which one would think should *drown* the  
 " Matters of this World as the Report of a  
 " Cannon doth a Whisper, or as the Sun  
 " *obscures* the poorest Glowworm. O won-  
 " derful *Stupidity* of an unrenewed Soul!  
 " O wonderful *Folly* and *Distractedness* of  
 " the Ungodly! that ever Men can *forget*,  
 " I say again, that they can *forget* Eternal  
 " Joy, Eternal Woe, and the Eternal God,  
 " and the Place of their Eternal Unchange-  
 " able Abodes, when they *stand even at the*  
 " *Door*, and there is but the *thin Veil* of  
 " *Flesh* between them and that amazing  
 " Sight, that eternal Gulph, and they are  
 " daily *dying* and *stepping in*!

Be convinc'd of the Certainty of these  
 Truths; that if we live after the *Flesh* we  
 shall die; that the *Broad-way* of Sin leads to  
 Destruction, and ends in it; that except ye  
 repent

Serm. II *repent, ye shall all likewise perish*; and then  
 W tremble to think how miserable the Condition of that Man is who has brought himself to this fearful Dilemma, that either God must be false, or he must be damn'd. But I hope better things of you, my Brethren, and things that accompany Salvation, though it is needful I should thus speak.

2. Here is the Sinner's Fault and Folly, which brings him to this Ruin, and which we are here warn'd against, and that is *despising his own Ways*; and the opening of this is what I chiefly aim'd at in the choice of this Text. Having Yesterday in another place, upon a like occasion, shew'd the Folly and Danger of despising our own Souls, as those do that are careless about their spiritual State, I thought this might fitly follow it, to shew the gross Absurdity they are guilty of that are careless about their particular Actions, and never heed whether what they do be right or wrong, than which nothing can be of more pernicious consequence, especially to Young People. And this is that which is here meant by the Sinner's *despising his own Way*.—*Qui negligenter instituit vitam & mores, so Piscator: Non curans quo modo vivat, so Mercer.* The former part of the Verse explains it, *He that keepeth the Commandment, keepeth his own Soul.* Those that walk circumspectly in the Way of Duty secure all the true Interests of their own Souls, and will be happy for ever. But those that despise their Way, and do not govern themselves



selves according to the Commanment, do Serm. II  
not keep to that, they ruin their Souls.

So that hence we may gather this  
Doctrin,

*That it is a very foolish and dangerous  
thing for Men to despise their own Ways.*

*Or thus: Those that despise their own  
Ways are in the High-road to utter Ruin.*

In the prosecution of this, as of the former, I must first shew when we may be said to *despise our own Ways*; and Secondly, the Folly and Danger of doing so, and then make Application.

For the First, When may we be said to *despise our own Ways*, our Conversation, and the particular Actions of it, which we ought to have a very tender and careful Regard to: You shall see the Crime open'd in six particulars.

First, When we are altogether unconcern'd about the End of our Ways, we may then be truly said to *despise our own Ways*. This Inconsideration of the End of our Way includes two things, which are both fatal.

1. Not designing the Great End, which in our way we should aim at, nor directing our Ways towards that End. We know very well, that the God that made us, made us for himself, to shew forth his Praise: That the Christ that bought us, bought us for himself, that we should not henceforth live to ourselves, but should be a peculiar People to him, should live to him, and be to him for a Name and a Praise; so that the Great End of our Being and Living is the Glory of our Creator

Serm. II Creator and Redeemer; and this End we should at least *virtually* and *habitually* aim at in all our Ways.

And it is a great Honour which the God of Heaven has put upon *our Ways*, that he is pleas'd to reckon himself *glorified* by them if they be good, and if in them *our Light* shine before Men, glorified by the Fruits of our Ways. That not only such a *favourable*, but such an *honourable* Construction should be put upon any thing we can say or do, as that it should be *acceptable* and *serviceable* to the Great God of Heaven and Earth, who is infinitely exalted *above all Blessing and Praise*! That the *Worms of the Earth* should be capable of doing the *Work of Angels*! Man's Honour, in being made *Lord of the inferior Creatures*, is very great: the Psalmist, when he observes him to have *Dominion over the Works of God's Hands*, reckons him in that *Crowned with Glory and Honour*. But his Honour in being made the *Mouth of the Inferiour Creatures* in praising God is much greater; that whereas they can only minister Matter for Praise, Man is capable of offering up actual Adorations and Praises to the Creator, and he is pleas'd to say, that *he that offers Praise, glorifies him*, and to take it among the Titles of his Honour, that *he inhabiteth the Praises of Israel*; for this we have much more reason to say, *Lord, what is Man, that thou magnifiest him, and makest such account of him?* In my Eye a Man looks more *truly Great* when he is in a right manner *worshipping his Creator at the Footstool* of

of his Throne, and giving Glory to him, than *Serm. II*  
 when he is domineering over his Fellow-  
 Creatures and giving Law to them on the  
 highest of the Thrones of the Kings of the  
 Earth.

Nor is it only in the solemn Acts of Religious Worship that we are to glorify God, but *1 Cor. 10. 31.*  
 even in our common Actions, whether we eat  
 or drink, or whatever we do, we must do it to  
 the Glory of God; that God in all things may  
 be glorified through Jesus Christ. The general  
 Scope and Tendency of our Conversations  
 must be towards the pleasing and praising  
 of God: His Favour must be pursued  
 as our chief Good in all we do, and his Honour  
 aim'd at as our highest End; that we  
 may in all our Actions express the Honour  
 we have for God, and may excite others to  
 Honour him. And when we do thus, to  
 borrow a Phrase that commonly passeth from  
 Man to Man, but much more properly from  
 Man to GOD, we do ourselves the greatest  
 Honour of subscribing ourselves His Admirers  
 and humble Servants. *1 Pet. 4. 11.*

But if instead of directing our Ways to  
 this Great End, we regard not whether we  
 do so or no; nay, if we direct them to a con-  
 trary End, and instead of living to God and  
 to his Glory, we live to ourselves, we eat to  
 ourselves, and drink to ourselves, as God com-  
 plains concerning his People, to please our-  
 selves, and gratify the Appetites of Sense,  
 that we may enjoy bodily Ease and Plea-  
 sure; if instead of seeking his Honour, and  
 the Honour that comes from him, we seek  
 our

Serm. II *our own Honour, in the Praise and Applause of Men.* If *Self* be the Centre in which the Lines of all our Actions meet, we may then be said to *despise our Ways*, and to *disparage* them, when we make them to truckle to an End so *mean and trifling*, when they are capable of being made to *serve* an End so *great and noble*. *Belshazzar* is said to have *lifted up himself against the Lord of Heaven*, whereas really he *debas'd and diminish'd* himself to the last degree when he serv'd his base and brutish Lusts with the *Wealth and Honour and Power* that God had given him, and *praised the Gods of Wood and Stone*, which neither bear, nor see, nor know; and must stand mute to that high Charge: *But the God in whose Hand thy Breath is, and in whose*  
 Dan. 5. 23. *are all thy Ways, hast thou not glorified.*

2. Not enquiring what will be the last End in which our Ways will terminate, and have their Period. That which makes our Way considerable, that is, the Course and Tenor of our Conversation, well worthy our Care, is, that it is either the *Broad-way* that leads down to Death and Destruction, or the *Narrow-way* that leads up to Life and Glory. The Path we walk in is either the *Path of Life*\*, or the *Path of the Destroyer*†. 'Tis not only either a *right Way* that will bring us to the Happiness we profess to be journeying towards, or a *wrong Way* that will not: The difference is greater than that, 'tis a Way will end either in *Heaven* or *Hell*.

\* Psal. 16.

11.

† Psal. 17. 4.

And doth it not concern us then to put the Question seriously to ourselves, *Whither*  
 will



will the Way I walk in lead me? where will it lodge me? that if it be the good Way that leads to Heaven, I may press forward in it; if the bad Way that leads to Hell, I may hasten back out of it. *Whither am I going? what will be in the end hereof? what shall I do in the Day of Visitation?* If I should die to night, as I am not sure to live till to-morrow morning, whither would Death bring me? These are Questions which all those that have a Concern for *their own way* will ask themselves frequently; as the Pilot that minds his Business often considers what Port he is bound for, and then, by inspecting his Compass, enquires whether the Course he now steers will bring him to it.

But with the most of Men this is the furthest thing in their Thoughts; they have not the Prudence to foresee the Evil, and to hide themselves, but with the simple they pass on, and are punish'd. We earnestly wish as God did of Israel, that they would be so wise as to consider their later End; but at the same time we have reason to complain as God did of Jerusalem, that because she remember'd not her last End, therefore she came down wonderfully.

Pro. 22. 3.  
Lam. 1. 9.

Those despise their Way who look not on it with that Concern which a serious Prospect of the End of it would fill them with; and therefore it is, that they go on securely in that Way of the Ungodly which will perish; but they consider not the Perdition that it will end in, and therefore are drawn into it, and drawn on in it, by the Allurements of World-

**Serm. II** Worldly Profit and Sensual Pleasure. That simple unwary Youth whom Solomon speaks of, was made to yield, and in a manner forc'd, by the Flatteries and Fair-speeches of the adulterous Woman, because he consider'd not what would follow upon it, that it was the direct Way to Hell, and to the Chambers of Death; so that he went as an Ox to the slaughter, and as a Fool to the Correction of the Stocks; as a Bird that hastens to the Snare, and knows not that it is for his Life. Men would not be brought, as they are, to believe a Lye, by which they will all be damn'd, if they were not given up to strong Delusions.

And are there any here that have liv'd thus many Years in this World, and never yet bestow'd one Serious Thought upon this Grand Question, What will become of them in the other World? that either never put the Question to themselves, or, like Pilate, had not Patience or Courage to stay for an Answer; that never yet judg'd it a matter worth being resolv'd in? Know then that you are of those who despise their own Ways: And can it be a thing of small account with you, whether you are going to Heaven or Hell? Is the Difference between them so minute as to justify your Indifference in this matter? O that at length you would bring this matter to a Trial; and not only so, but bring it to an Issue with all the Solitude that a matter of such Importance both deserves and requires. Make it to appear that you value your ways, by being inquisitive, as a careful Traveller is, whether the Way you are in will

will bring you to your Journey's end if you *Serm. II*  
 proceed in it, or not, and proceed accordingly. *If ye will enquire, enquire ye;* and leave  
 not a matter of such moment at uncertainty.

*Secondly,* When we are indifferent about  
 the Rule of our Ways, and the Measures by  
 which we govern ourselves in them, we despise  
 our own Ways. Mens Practises will be gui-  
 ded and rul'd by their Principles, and those  
 that are loose and unfix'd in their Principles  
 can never be even and steady in their Practises.  
 Those certainly despise their way that walk at  
 all Adventures, and live at large, when they  
 should walk circumspectly, and live by Rule.

1. We despise our Way if we set aside the  
 Rules which God has honour'd us and our Way  
 with the prescribing of: God has bid us stand  
 in the way and see; consider what is the Way  
 appointed you to walk in, ask for the old Paths,  
 for God has not put us to seek for new Rules  
 to go by, such as were never heard of before,  
 but such as were from the beginning, and he  
 hath said, walk therein and ye shall find Rest  
 for your Souls, Spiritual Rest in your Way,  
 and Eternal Rest at the end of it: But they  
 put Contempt upon their Way, which God  
 had discover'd such a Concern for; for they  
 said, We will not walk therein.

Jer. 6. 16.

It is a great Honour God has put upon our  
 Way, (1.) that He hath given us the Scri-  
 ptures to be the Guide of our way; hath in  
 them shew'd us what is good, and what the  
 Lord our God doth require of us; hath there  
 told us what are the By-paths we should care-  
 fully

E

Serm. II fully avoid, what the *Stumbling-stones* we should take heed of: His Word is a *Light to our Feet, and a Lamp to our Paths*, not only a *discovering* but a *directing* Light. Could a greater Regard have been had to our Actions by the God that made us, than to give us a *Divine Revelation* exactly suited to our Case, and accommodated to all the Steps we have to take, on purpose to be our Guide to Heaven? What an Honour did God put upon *Israel* in the *Wilderness*; tho' an undeserving People, and upon their passage thro' it, that he gave them a *Pillar of Cloud and Fire* to go before them, and *shew 'em the way* in which they should go, and to direct all their Removes and Rests! Such a Divine Conduct are we under, that have the written Word to be our *Guide and Counsellor*!

But we *despise our way* if we make not use of this Rule, and *conform* not our Hearts and Lives to it; if it be an *indifferent* thing to us whether we be *ruled* by the *Word of God*, or no; if we never *consult* that *Oracle*, never *try* our Ways by that *Touchstone*, nor are in care to walk by the *Light of the Law and the Testimony*. As *Presumptuous Sinners* *trample* upon the *Law*, and do what they can to *make it void*, so *Careless Sinners* *cast the Law behind their Backs*, and keep it as much as they can *out of their sight*, as if it were not worth while to *order their Conversation* according to it. Those that *despise the Commandment of the Lord*, that *despise the Word*, and *fear not the Commandment*, they *despise* *Prov. 13. 13* *their own ways*, and *shall be destroy'd*; But as



many as walk according to this Rule, as they put a Respect upon it, so they put a Respect upon their own Way, and Peace shall be upon them, and Mercy, as is upon all the Israel of God, which is guided and govern'd by that Rule. Serm. II

Gal. 6. 16.

Let young People cleanse their way, and make it pure and pleasant, acceptable to God, comfortable to themselves, and beautiful before Men. Let them direct their way to the Right End, and in the Right Paths, by taking heed thereto with a constant Care and Concern, according to the Word, which we must always have regard to. [See Mr. Nesbit's Sermon to Young People lately, on that Text.] Psal. 119. 9

(2.) That he hath appointed Conscience to be a Monitor to us concerning our way, according to the Scriptures. As the Commandment is a Lamp, and the Law a Light, so the Spirit of a Man likewise is the Candle of the Lord. Conscience rightly inform'd is an excellent Guide in subordination to the Scriptures, and God hath shew'd his Care of our Actions, by appointing us such a Tutor and Guardian, such an Inspector of our Manners, to be always with us, to check us when we do amiss, and to direct and encourage us to do well; to be a Voice behind us saying unto us, This is the way, walk in it, when we are ready to turn aside. God, by enduing us with a Faculty of reflecting upon our Actions, which the Beasts have not, of accusing and excusing ourselves, hath evidenc'd the Concern he has about our Ways, that they be streight and good. Prov. 20. 27.

Isa. 30. 21.

Serm. II

2 Chron.  
25. 16.

But if we have *no Regard* to the Admonitions of *Conscience*, and turn a *deaf Ear* to them; if we say to that *Seer*, *see not*; if we smite our Hearts for smiting us, or threaten to do so, as the King of *Judah* did the *Prophet*, *Forbear, why shouldst thou be smitten?* if it be all one to us whether our *Consciences* be *pleas'd* or *displeas'd*, and no care is taken to keep 'em *void of Offence*; then we *despise our own way*, as if it were not worth looking *into*, or looking *after*. But however *Conscience* may for a time be *slighted* and *silenc'd*, *brow-beaten* and *run down*, first or last it *will be heard*.

O that *Young People* would betimes manifest their Concern for *their own way*, by paying a *Respect* to *their own Consciences*, getting them rightly inform'd concerning Good and Evil, Sin and Dury; *bearkening* to their *Dictates*, tho' they be but *whisper'd*; keeping them *tender* and afraid of Sin, and *keeping up* their *dominion* over Appetite and Passion, and all the Lusts of the *Flesh* and of the *Eye*. Often call upon *Conscience* to do its Office, and do not only *give it leave* to deal *faithfully* with you, but *charge it* to do so: Maintain the *Honour of the Government* in your own Souls, and the due *Course of Law*, and suffer it not to be insulted, obstructed, or made *despicable*: Thus Order is *kept up* in the Soul, and its Peace *secur'd*; and 'tis the greatest Honour you can do yourselves, to maintain a *Value* and *Veneration* for your *Consciences*.

1. We

2. We despise our way if we set up and follow other Rules of walking, in opposition to those which God has appointed us; and such Rules as are not only pernicious, but unworthy to be regarded in the conduct of our way.

What mean Thoughts have those of their own way, 1. that are guided and govern'd by Appetite and Passion, Fancy and Imagination, and the Sight of their own Eyes; that will do just what they have a mind to do, whether right or wrong: *Quicquid libet licet*, that's their Principle; if it be grateful to Sense it shall be lawful; they will do what is right in their own Eyes, and what pleaseth them, whether it be right in God's Eyes, and please him or no. --- We will certainly do whatsoever thing goes forth out of our own Mouth, is the Language of those that despise their own way. Jer. 44. 17. By this Solomon describes the Folly of the Young-man, That he walks in the way of his Heart, and in the sight of his Eyes. Eccl. 11. 9.

But are those fit to direct a Way that leads to Eternity? Must the Powers that are brutal command a Creature that is rational? Must Human Reason and Divine Revelation, and the Oracles of both, give way to the Desires of the Flesh, and the more foolish Inventions which Man has found out since his departure from his God? Nothing so unseemly as Servants on Horseback and Princes walking as Servants upon the Earth: Nothing so unsufferable as these Servants when they reign, these Fools when they are pamper'd. Can we think that Man, who was made to be a Subject to his Maker, should be allow'd

**Serm. II** a boundless Liberty, and sent out free with the wild Ass? No; you mistake yourselves if you think you may do as you please.

2. Those also that are guided and govern'd by the Course and Custom of this vain and foolish World, despise their own Way, who think that a Leader and Director wise enough and good enough and safe enough for them. Those matter not much what they do, that resolve to do as the most do, and follow the Multitude, tho' it be to do Evil; nor whither they go, that resolve to go down the Stream without asking whither it will carry them. Christ calls Follow me, and 'twill be an Honour to us and our Conversation to have such a Leader, and to follow him whithersoever he goes, who is Wisdom itself: The World calls Follow me, and we cannot do ourselves a greater Dishonour, than to put ourselves under the Conduct of such a Leader; yet thus the Children of Disobedience do, they walk according to the Course of this World: 'Tis all one to them what they do, so they can but recommend themselves to the gay and the great, or to the Worldly-wise, on whom that Principle has a greater Influence than all the Principles of their Religion, As good be out of the World as out of the Fashion.

What Contempt do those put upon their own Ways that are easily drawn aside from their Duty into By-paths by any one that will but put up the Finger, and flatter them, and speak 'em a few fair Words, and tell 'em every body else doth so? It is with them as the Apostle saith it was with the Gentiles,

1 Cor. 12. 2.

they



they were carried away even as they were led. Sermon II  
 Those make no account of their Way whose Hearts are thus weak, thus easie, thus yielding to the Suggestions and Sollicitations of them that lie in wait to deceive, and make them their Ruine.

Thirdly, When we are wavering and unsettled in the Course and Tenour of our Ways, then we despise them. Those that in the Course of their Lives are of no consistency with themselves, but halt between two, and are continually contradicting themselves, they make nothing of their Way, nor bring any thing to pass in it; these are the double-minded Men, whose Hearts are divided between God and the World, the Spirit and the Flesh, as if they had the Art of reconciling Contraries; and they are accordingly unstable in all their ways, in a continual struggle between their Convictions and their Corruptions, and sometimes they yield to the one and sometimes to the other; and thus they go on from time to time, fed with a Fancy as if it would justify the Abundance of bad in them, that there's something in them that is good which doth condemn it, and witness against it. But this is despising their way, as if it were not worth being entirely submitted to God, but it were enough to be in part so: But those who thus, like Reuben, are unstable as Water, like him, shall never excell. Jam. 1. 8. Gen. 49. 4.

It is certain those have not the Concern they ought to have for their own Ways,  
 1. Who have not Resolution enough to persist

Serm. II *in good Purposes, and to hold to them.*

 You shall have 'em sometimes in a *good mind* under the *Convictions* of the Word, or the *Corrections* of the Rod, or when they are going out into the World *fresh*, from under the *influence* of a Religious Education, they will then promise very fair, *All that the Lord shall say unto us we will do, and be obedient* : And we have reason to think they mean as they say, and intend no other ; but the *Buds* and *Blossoms* are *blasted*, their good Purposes prove to no purpose, and 'tis for want of *Resolution* ; 'tis because they have not a *just Value* for *their own way*, otherwise they would stick to a good Bargain for it when they have made it.

You that are young, I hope, are ready to *engage yourselves* to the Lord, to promise that you will *walk in his Ways*, and *keep his Statutes*, but will you *adhere* to it ? will you *abide* by it ? having *sworn*, will you *perform* it ? will you *with purpose of Heart* cleave to the Lord ? This would indeed put a *Value* upon your Way, if you had indeed *one Heart* and *one Way* to fear God for ever. This was Joth. 24. 21 it that *Joshua* labour'd to bring the People of *Israel* to, when he put it to their choice, whether they would serve *other gods*, or the *True God* only, and laid before them what there was in the Service of God that was *discouraging* : All was to bring them to this fixed Resolution, and keep them to it, *Nay, but we will serve the Lord.*

2. Those who have not *Constancy* enough to proceed and persevere in the good Practices wherein

wherein they have begun, have not the Con- Serm. II  
cern they ought to have for their own Ways.   
Those who did run well, but something binder'd them, and drove them off; that had a  
first Love, but have left it, even the Kindness  
of their Youth, and the Love of their Espousals,  
as if they had found some Iniquity in God or  
in his Ways, which yet we challenge them  
to produce and prove any Instance of. Those  
despise their Way, who having begun in the  
Spirit, and in the Flesh, whose Goodness is as  
the Morning Cloud and the early Dew, which  
passeth away.

Hos. 6. 4.

You that now in the days of your Youth are  
mindful of your Creator, 'tis a good Way in  
which you set out, make it to appear that  
you have a Value for it, by persevering in it;  
and take heed lest, having escap'd the Polluti-  
ons of the World thro' the knowledge of Christ,  
you should thro' carelessness of your Way be  
again entangled therein and overcome, and so  
fall from your own steadfastness. I beseech you  
look to yourselves and your own Way, and to  
every step you take in it, lest ye lose the things  
ye have wrought and gain'd, that you may re-  
ceive a full Reward. Notice is taken in the  
Character of Jehoshaphat, that he walk'd in  
the first ways of his Father David; 'tis pity  
but those whose first ways are good ways shou'd  
have such regard to 'em, as still to improve,  
that their last ways may be their best ways.

2 Pet. 1.  
20.

2 Job. 8.

2 Chron.  
17. 3.

Fourthly, If we do not apply ourselves to  
God in our ways, and acknowledge him, we de-  
spise our own ways. This Honor God has been

**Serm.** It pleas'd to put upon our Ways, that he has undertaken to be our Guide and Guard in them, if we look up to him as we ought: If therefore we have not our Eye up to him, if we make light of this Privilege, as all those do who do not make use of it, we lose this Honor.

1. God has promis'd those that seek him, that he will teach them the way in which they should go, that he will teach Sinners in the way, will teach them his way, if they will but meekly attend his Conduct, that he will teach them in the way that he shall chuse, when otherwise they would be apt to turn aside into the Way that a vain Mind and a corrupt Heart shall chuse; *V. 12.* He hath promis'd that he will find out some means or other to make their way plain before them, to guide them by his Counsel, to guide them with his Eye, by some little intimation of his Mind, which they with whom his Secret is do understand the meaning of: He knows how much depends upon the right ordering of their Way, and how much 'tis his Delight when 'tis a good Way, and therefore the steps of a good man are order'd by the Lord, and we are instructed to pray, *Lord, order my steps in thy word.*

*Psal. 37.*  
23.

*Psal. 119.*  
233.

But now, if we do not think this Divine Conduct worth asking, if we think we do not need it, or can do well enough without it; if in the most difficult and doubtful cases we go on leaning to our own Understanding, and ask not Counsel at the Mouth of the Lord, we despise our way, we put Contempt upon it, and bring more Contempt. Thus they did that



took Counsel, but not of God, and cover'd with Serm. II  
a Covering, but not of his Spirit; Isa. 30. 1,   
They that over-value their own Wisdom undervalue their own Way.

2. God has promis'd them that seek him to bear them up and strengthen them in their Way, to fortifie 'em against the Temptations of their Way, to furnish them for the Duties and Services of it, and to work all their good Works in them and for them. What an Honor has God hereby put upon our Way and Work, that he has promis'd us Grace sufficient for us, that as our Day is, so shall our Strength be; to enlarge our Hearts, that we may run the way of his Commandments, and work in us both to will and to do! But if we slight this Grace which he has offer'd us and encourag'd us to ask, and instead of committing our way to the Lord, go on in it in our own Strength, as if we had no need of the Divine Aids, we then despise our way, and 'tis just with God to leave us to ourselves; to leave the Youths, who are confident of their own Abilities, to faint and be weary, and the Young-men utterly to fail, while by renew'd Strength from him the Lame Man is made to leap as a Hart, and the Tongue of the Dumb to sing in the ways of the Lord. Isa. 40. 31.

Fifthly, When we are careless of our past ways, and take not the account we ought to take of them, we then despise our ways. It is our Honor that we can look back, 'tis our Concern to look back, because if we have done amiss there's a way provided to undo it by Repen-

Serm. II penitance, and prevent the fatal consequences of it. If we neglect that, we *despise our way*.

1. If we are *not willing that others should reprove us for what they see or hear is amiss in us*, we have not the Care we ought to have for our own Way. So many things there are *amiss*, and so much is it our Concern to have them *mended*, and yet withal so *partial* are we in favour of ourselves, that we have need of more Eyes than our own to *discover us to ourselves*: And 'tis a great advantage to us in our Way to have faithful Friends about us, to tell us of our *Faults* and of our *Dangers*; This is *not well*, t'other is *not safe*; this is a *Blemish* to you, and that will be a *Snare* to you.

But there are those who take it as an Affront to be thus *admonish'd*, are ready to fly in the Face of their Reprovers, yea, tho' they be *Ministers*, Reprovers *in the Gate*, Reprovers by Office, yea, tho' they be *their own Ministers*, that ought to have some Care particularly of *their Souls*; tho' they be their *Parents and Masters*, who rebuke with Authority; tho' they be those to whom they have *given the right Hand of Fellowship*, with a mutual Obligation to *watch over one another*; yet they are ready to say to them who shew 'em the False-steps they have taken, *What's that to you?* Meddle with your own Business, we know *what we have to do better than you can teach us*: And it's well if they bear them not a Grudge for it. Is not this an Evidence they *despise their Way*, tho' it be a Way that leads either to Heaven or Hell? They would not thus despise their Way from  
one

one part of the City to the other; for there Serm. II  
 they would thank any one that would shew  
 them where they have miss'd their Way, or  
 are in danger of missing it, and would direct  
 them in the right Way.

2. If we are *not willing to examin ourselves,*  
*and to search and try our own Ways,* and to call  
 ourselves to an account, and correct ourselves  
 for what we have done amiss, we *despise*  
*our own Ways,* and do not make that Account  
 of them which God doth, and which he ex-  
 pects we should do. He *looks upon Men when*  
*they have sinned,* to see what they will do next,  
 whether they will make any sorrowful Re-  
 flections upon it; and whether *their Spirits*  
*will be grieved for that by which they have*  
*grieved his Spirit:* And *if there be any that*  
*say, I have sinned, and have perverted that*  
*which was right, and it profited me not;* he is  
 pleas'd with it, and meets such returning  
 Souls more than halfway with his Comforts. Job. 33. 27.  
 But if on the contrary when he *hearkens and*  
*bears they speak not aright;* if none of them  
 say, *what have I done?* and it's *all wrong still* Jer. 8. 6.  
 if they be not brought to that, he is disap-  
 pointed, and is provok'd to say, that *his Spirit*  
*shall not any more strive with them.*

Those *despise their Way* who never re-  
 member against themselves their former In-  
 quiries, nor enquire *wherein they have err'd;*  
 that never examin their Consciences, nor re-  
 view the Records of them; lie down at night  
 and never ask what they have done amiss  
*that day;* enter upon a Sabbath, and never  
 look back upon their *Weeks-work;* perhaps  
 go.

Serm. II go to the Lord's-Table every Month, and do not *examin themselves* how their Conversation has been order'd since they were last renewing their Covenants with God in that Ordinance : And is not this a great Contempt put upon *their own Way* ? They are willing to take it for granted all has been well, as *Ephraim*, tho' he had the *Balances of Deceit in his Hand*, and *lov'd to oppress*, yet flatter'd himself with a Conceit that *they should find no Iniquity in him that were Sin*,

Hof. 12. 8. nothing very bad, or at least nothing to be seen.

And while they thus neglect to enquire into *their own Ways*, how can they tell what Confession of Sin to make, and what to pray particularly for the Pardon of ? And how can they tell what Sin to covenant against, and to stand upon their guard against ? You that are great Dealers in the World, know of what Consequence it is to you to keep your Accounts even, and often to review them ; and those who are shy of looking into their Books, it is to be fear'd, 'tis because they are not willing to know the worst by their Affairs ; they suspect they are going *behind-hand*, and by this means are likely to go *more and more so*.

And will it not be of dangerous Consequence to the Prosperity of our Souls if we neglect to look over the Books of Conscience, that we may renew our Repentance, and make our Peace with God in Christ ? He that is washed needeth to wash his Feet ; the sooner the better, and in order to that to observe what filth he has contracted ; if he do not, he *despiset his Way*. Consideration of

our



our Ways is the first step towards Conversion from the Errors of them, and therefore reckon not that you can *safely go forward* till you have first *seriously look'd back*.

Sixthly, When we are *heedless and inconsiderate as to the way that is before us*, and walk as all *Adventurers*, we *despise our own Way*. If we think its *all one* what we do, that God Almighty is neither *pleas'd* nor *displeas'd* with any of our Thoughts or Affections, Words or Actions, and therefore do as we please, and ask no Question for Conscience sake: If in doubtful Cases we never consider what's our *Duty*, but what's our Inclination and secular Interest: If we go on in our Callings and never consider how we may glorify God in the use of them, and keep a good Conscience: If like the Men of *Lais* we dwell *carelessly*, never look back with any Regret, nor forward with any Concern, we *despise our Way*.

1. If we are in no care to avoid Sin, which *mays our Path*, and is a By-path, then we are careless of our Way; as a Fool upon the Road that never picks his Way, but goes, as we say, *through thick and thin*. The chief, and indeed the only thing we have to dread in our Way is Sin, for nothing but that can hurt or hinder us; the Sin that most easily befalls us, is the *Weight* that must be laid aside; that's it that *defiles our Way*, that disorders and perplexeth it; that's the *false Way* which we are to hate.

But

## The Folly of despising

**Serm. II.** But those that are *careless of their Way*,  
 are not aware of their Danger of Sin, and  
 their Danger by Sin, and therefore *rush* into  
 Jer. 8. 5. it as the Horse into the Battle; they consider  
 Eccl. 5. 1. not that they do evil, nor what a great deal  
 of evil there is in what they do. They have  
 it may be *deceitful Ways* of Trade, carry it  
 on by a Course of Lying and Fraud, cheat-  
 ing their Neighbours, cheating the Govern-  
 ment, and go on securely in it, not consi-  
 dering what an *Abomination to the Lord* both  
 the *lying Lips* and the *false Weights and*  
*Measures* are. They keep up drunken Clubs,  
 and in them mispend their Time, and dis-  
 fit themselves for the Service of God, not  
 considering that *Drunkenness* and *Revellings*,  
 and suchlike, are *Works of the Flesh*, of which  
 we have been told again and again, that  
 they which do such things shall not inherit the  
 Gal. 5. 21. *Kingdom of God.*

All the Corruptions of our Way arise from  
 the Corruptions of our Hearts, and if we take  
 no care to mortify and subdue them, and to  
 suppress the first Risings of them, to get the  
 Habits of Sin weaken'd, and so shame our-  
 selves, and frighten ourselves out of those  
 Inclinations and Dispositions which are so  
 hurtful to us; if we do not thus strike at  
 the Root, 'tis a sign we have not the Con-  
 cern we ought to have for our own Way.

Our own Corruptions are excited and  
 drawn out by the Temptations of Satan. We  
 are told of our Danger from that Enemy,  
 but are *careless of our Way* if we do not put  
 on the whole Armour of God, and in depen-  
 dance

dance upon Divine Grace put on Resolution Serm. II to resist him, and to repel all his Assaults. He hath *Devices* and *Wiles* wherewith to beguile the unwary, *latet Anguis in herba*, there's many a Snake, and many a Snare under the green Grass, and therefore we have need to look where we tread; and that we may be kept from Evil, are concern'd to *abstain* from all the *appearances of Evil*, and to take heed of *approaches* towards it; if we do not, we are *careless of our Way*.

2. If we are *in no Care to do our Duty*, to be found in the way of it, and to do it *as is ought to be done*, we are *careless of our Way*. It is not enough to the making of our Way good that we *cease to do Evil*, but we must *learn to do well*, and must learn to *do it well*, which will not be done without Consideration. We must see to it, that in all the Duties of the Christian Life we walk *circumspectly, discreetly, accurately, exactly*, & must do it *by Rule*, and therefore must do it *with Care*. Eph. 5. 16.

What we do that is Good, must be done from a right *Principle*, for a right *End*, and in a right *Manner*, and therefore it must be done *Carefully*, because herein it is so easy a thing to miss it; and if we are carry'd on in a Road of Religious Exercises only by Custom, and not by Conscience and a due Concern, we do but *mock God* and *deceive ourselves*, and it will turn to no good account.

Many an *Opportunity* we have of *doing good* to others, and *getting good* to our own Souls, which, if we did but walk *carefully*, we might make a good Improvement of, but we

Serm. II we lose it and let it slip, and it is a sign we *despise our Way*; for the Husbandman that has a respect to his Business, and a value for it, will not drop his proper time for *Sowing and Reaping*.

2 King. 10.  
11.

What is done in Religion *without Care*, is done accordingly. If we go about solemn Exercises without solemn Preparation, we commonly come off from them without Advantage; and if the Commandment be not duly *observ'd*, it will not be *obey'd* as it should be. 'Tis charg'd upon *Jehu*, that *he took no heed to walk in the Law of the Lord God of Israel with all his Heart*. And it is true of many, they do not *walk surely*, are in no care to go upon *sure Grounds*, and to take every step right, which is a sign they do not *walk uprightly*, nor have any true value for *their own Way*.

For the second, I am next to shew what a foolish and dangerous thing it is for us to *despise our own Ways*, and what an Absurdity they are guilty of that do so. Believe it, Sirs, the *Ways* we *despise* are not so *despicable* as we would make ourselves believe they are; but a great deal of stress ought to be laid upon what we *say* and *do*, yea, and upon what we *think* too; and consequently a great deal of *Care and Concern* ought to be *about it*.

This will appear if we consider these five things:

First, That the God of Heaven *observes and takes particular notice of all our Ways*, even the *Ways of our Hearts*, even their *Thoughts* and



and Intentions are *naked and open before the* Serm. II  
*Eyes of him with whom we have to do,* *πρὸς ὃν*  
*ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος,* with whom there is for us an *Heb. 4. 13.*  
*Account running,* and to whom there must  
 be shortly an *Account given up.* God sees  
 our Ways, not only as he sees *all things,* but  
 with a particular Observation, as things  
 that must be *judg'd of,* and by which *Judg-*  
*ment must be given justly.*

It is a general Truth laid down, and  
 comes in as an Argument against all secret  
 Sins, and those which are most artfully and  
 industriously conceal'd; that *the Ways of*  
*Man are before the Eyes of the Lord,* and he  
 pondereth all his goings. But we should each *Prov. 5. 21.*  
 of us apply it to ourselves, and to our own  
 goings. *Job doth so: Doth not he see my* *Job. 31. 4.*  
*Ways, and count all my Steps?* *David doth* *Psal. 139. 3.*  
*so: Thou compassest my Path, and my lying*  
*down, and art acquainted with all my Ways.*  
 Now, shall we make a *light matter* of that  
 which the God of Heaven makes such a *great*  
*matter of,* or let that in us pass *allowedly*  
*unobserv'd,* which he so *carefully observes?*  
 'Tis natural to us to have some regard to  
 ourselves, that we observe a due *Decorum*  
 when we are in the Presence of our *Betters,*  
 whose Eye we observe to be *fix'd upon us.*  
 Therefore we should have a *jealous Eye*  
 upon ourselves, because God has an Eye up-  
 on us wherever we are, and whatever we  
 are *doing.*

Therefore we should be very careful and  
 diligent to *avoid Sin,* because all our *evil*  
*ways are before God;* they can none of them  
 be

Serm. II be hid from his piercing Eye; he sees all the secret *Wandrings* of our Hearts from him, and all the secret *Risings* of our Hearts against him, and is much displeased with them. And shall our Sins be no Provocation to us, when they are such a Provocation to him? Doth he complain of his *Peoples bent to backslide from him*, and shall not they complain of it? Is he *broken with their whorish Heart*, and shall they make light on't?

And therefore we should be very careful and diligent to *do our Duty*, because God takes notice of all we think or say, or *do well*, and is pleas'd with it, and it shall be own'd in the great Day, even a *Cup of cold Water given to a Disciple*; which should engage us to wait all Opportunities of doing Good, because God observes all the Good we do, especially if it be done *in secret*; for that shall with a particular Regard be *seen*, and openly recompens'd. *The Lord knows the Way of the Righteous*, and therefore they should themselves take cognizance of it, of every *Path*, and every *Step*.

Secondly, That *Satan is a subtil Enemy that seeks to pervert our Ways*, and to draw them into his Service and Interests. If we despise our Ways, yet he doth not, but labours with the utmost subtilty and seduliry to draw us aside out of the good and right Way, and seduce us into the Paths that lead to Ruin. He is represented, and his Agents, by the foolish Woman, who calls *Passengers that go right on their way*, to come share in the

the stolln Waters. Now if *Satan* be so *Serm. II*  
*watchful* and *busie* to make us turn out of  
 our Way, or *twiste* in it, and lets slip no Op-  
 portunity of *doing us a Mischief* in our Way,  
 we are Fools if we be unconcern'd, and slip  
 Opportunities of *doing ourselves a Kindness*.  
 Our Way is *beser*, and therefore we should  
 be never off our Guard.

Especially because then our Way is most  
*endanger'd* when it is most *despis'd*: When  
 we *least consider* what we do, our Spiritual  
 Enemies gain *most Advantage* against us,  
 and make an *easy Prey* of us. *Satan's* De-  
 sign is more than half accomplish'd when he  
 has brought Men to an Indifference as to  
 their own Actions, and let things go as  
 they will, without either Forecast or Revi-  
 ew.

This is a good Reason therefore why we  
 should be *Sober* and *Vigilant*, and make Con-  
 science of what we say and do, because our  
*Adversary the Devil* is seeking to devour us.  
 Therefore *St. Paul* is jealous over the *Co-*  
*rinthians*, and has a watchful Eye upon all  
 their Ways, because there is danger, lest  
 they should be *beguil'd* as *Eve* was through  
 the *subtiley* of the *Serpent*. And of the *Thes.* 1 Thes. 3. 5.  
*salonians*, lest by any means the Tempter have  
 tempted them, and his Labour should be in  
 vain; and for the same reason we should  
 have a Jealousie of ourselves and our own way,  
 lest if we *sleep*, and neglect our way, we lose  
 our *Spear and Cruse of Water*, as *Saul* did  
 when he slept, nay, and our Heads and Lives,  
 as *Sisera* did, when he slept in the Tent of  
 one who pretended to be his Friend.

Third

**Serm. II** *Thirdly, That we have many Eyes upon us, that are Witnesses to our Way. David prays, Lord lead me in a plain Path because of mine Enemies; because of them that observe me; so it is in the Original. We have need to look about us, for there are many about us that look upon us, to take notice what we say and do. Let us walk honestly, εὐχνομένως, decently, and as become our Character, (so the Word signifies) as in the day when we may be seen, and when we are in the midst of those that will observe us.*

Psa. 5. 3  
27. 11.

Rom. 13.  
13.

Some have their Eye upon our Way perhaps, to take Pattern by it, and that they may learn to do as we do, and then I am sure we ought not to despise our Way, because the Example of it may have a great Influence upon others; so that if we do amiss, others will do amiss too, and so we shall become accessary to their Sin, and shall be to answer not only for our Ways, but as the Scripture speaks, for the Fruit of our Doings, as Jeroboam for his Sin wherewith he made Israel to Sin. If it be a good Reason why we should not make Friendship, nor keep company with an angry Man, lest we learn his Ways, much more is it a Reason why an angry Man should moderate his Anger, and put on Meekness, lest others should learn his Ways, and get a Snare to their Souls, lest by setting his own House on fire, he burn down a whole Street. We ought to be very careful what Language we speak, whether that of Canaan or that of Ashdod, for those about us will learn our Dialect, and be either the better or the worse for it.

Prov. 22.  
24.

Neh. 13. 24

Some



Some perhaps have their Eye upon our Serm. II Way to seek for matter of Reproach; they march for our Halting, and if we say or do amiss, Religion shall suffer by it, and be evil spoken of; and the Enemies of the Lord will have their Mouths open'd to Blasphemy, as in David's case. You that make a greater profession of Religion, that attend Preaching and Catechising more than others, have need to be very strict and regular in your whole Conversation; for otherwise, by reason of you the Way of Truth will be evil spoken of: Religion will be struck at, and wounded through your sides. That, which in others would be wink'd at as a small fault, will in you be magnify'd and made a great matter of. Take ye therefore good heed to yourselves, that ye may cut off Occasion from them which desire Occasion to reproach the good Ways of the Lord, and prejudice People against them.

2 Sam. 12.  
13.

2 Cor. 11.  
12.

Some perhaps have their Eye upon our Way, that on the other hand would rejoyce to see us do that which becomes us, would have no greater Joy than to see us walk in the Truth. Our Strictness and Stedfastness would be their Strength and Song. Now we live, saith the Apostle, if ye stand fast. We have reason to think that the good Angels rejoyce, as in the Conversion of Sinners, so in the even and regular walking of the Saints; and therefore we are charg'd to behave ourselves very reverently in the Worship (a Branch of our way which is by no means to be despis'd) because of the Angels.

1 Cor. 11.  
10.

Serm. II gels. Now if our Way be compass'd about with so great a Cloud of Witnesses, it concerns us to have an Eye to it ourselves; and to run, and run well, the Race that is set before us, especially looking unto Jesus.

Fourthly, That we must shortly give an Account of all our Ways. As there is now an Account kept of them all in the Book of Gods Omniscience, and of the Sinners own Conscience, because we are here in a state of Trial and Probation, so there must shortly be an Account given of them all, and they must all be review'd, for God requireth that Eccl. 3. 15. which is past, and will tell thee, These things thou hast done.

It is a Folly for us to despise our own Ways, and make a light Matter of them, and to turn off the Errors of them with a Jest, when so great a Matter will be made of them in the Judgment; in the Judgment at hand, which follows immediately upon Death; in the Judgment at last, the publick Judgment of the Great Day. Therefore it concerns us to Fear God and keep his Commandments, and to see that our Matters be right and good, for God shall bring every Work into Judgment, Eccl. 12. 14. bring it into the Account, with every secret thing, whether it be Good or whether it be Evil. This was known and press'd by an Old-Testament Preacher, but is much more clearly reveal'd in the New-Testament, which tells us that we must all appear, one as well as another, all without exception, before the Judgment of Christ, to give an

an account of every thing done in the Body, *Serm. II*  
 and to receive according to it, whether it be *W*  
 Good or Evil. Brethren, these are the true  
 Sayings of God; all we are doing now will  
 be call'd over again in the Day of Judgment;  
 as sure as we see *this day* we shall see *that day*,  
 and 'twill be to us according as we are found.

O what a Concern should this fill us with,  
 to think that what we are now doing every  
 Day has a reference to *that Day*; which me-  
 thinks should make every Day a Great Day,  
 a Judgment-Day with us: For if we would  
 daily judge ourselves concerning our own way, *1 Cor. 11.*  
 we should not be judg'd of the Lord. It would *31.*  
 awaken us to consider our Ways, if we would  
 but consider how they will appear in that Day,  
 when we and they must appear undisguis'd,  
 in true colours, and with what Eye we our-  
 selves shall look upon 'em, an Eye of Shame,  
 or an Eye of Satisfaction, and Thankfulness  
 to God. This should especially give check  
 to the Looses and Extravagances of Youth:  
 Thou hast a mind, O young Man, to lay the  
 Reins in the Neck of thine Appetites and Pas-  
 sions, to indulge thy self in a sensual Liberty, *Eccl. 11. 9.*  
 to walk in the way of thine Heart, and in the  
 sight of thine Eyes, and this would be a brave  
 way of living, if thou wast never to hear of  
 it again; but know thou, that for all these things  
 God will bring thee into Judgment, for all thy  
 Indulgence of thy self in Carnal Mirth and  
 Sensual Pleasure, unbounded and uncontrol'd;  
 for all those merry Days and merry Nights of  
 thine, from which every thing was banish'd  
 that was serious, and when God was not in all,  
 not in any of thy Thoughts. Let the Thoughts

Serm. II of this take Young People off from their inordinate pursuits of the Pleasures of Sense, and deaden their Desires towards them, that they may acquaint themselves with the Pleasures of Religion, which are Spiritual and Divine, and as much exceed the other as the richest Wine doth Puddle-Water.

*Fifthly*, That according as our Ways are now, it is likely to be well or ill with us to Eternity. 'Tis the greatest Folly imaginable to despise our Way in this World, for as our Way is, so will our End be in that World which has no end. Those that go upon the Water only for Pleasure care not what Course they steer; but they that go upon Business must steer the right Course, and secure their Point.

Believe it, Sirs, and I pray consider it, that you are here upon Trial for another World, and it will be to you a World of Happiness or Misery, according as you pass your Trials. As you spend your Time you are likely to spend your Eternity. If the prevailing Temper of your Mind now be vain and carnal, selfish and sensual, earthly and worldly, and you go out of the World under the dominion of such a Temper, you are utterly unfit for Heaven, and so is Heaven for you, it would be no Heaven to you. If the general course of your Conversation be contrary to the Rules of Christianity; if instead of being constant and devout Worshippers of God, you slight and neglect Religious Exercises, and think meanly of 'em; if instead of living by Faith in Christ, and in a continual dependance upon him for Righteousness and Grace, you lay him aside  
and



and overlook him in what you have to do with **Serm. II**  
 God; if instead of living a Life of *Self-denial*  
 and *Mortification* you *indulge yourselves* in all  
 the Gratifications of Sense, and are in them  
 as in your *Element*; if instead of *bridling* your  
 Passions you *indulge* 'em upon every Provo-  
 cation, and are impatient of the least Instance  
 of Contempt and Contradiction, as if *Humi-*  
*lity* and *Meekness* were no part of the *Law of*  
*Christ*, or the *Livery of Christians*; if instead  
 of *loving all Men*, even your *Enemies*, and *for-*  
*giving Injuries*, you have a *Jealousie* of all, an  
*Antipathy* to some, and bear *Malice* and *Ill-*  
*will* to all that you apprehend have been in-  
 jurious to you, or stand in your light or in  
 your way; if instead of being *charitable* and  
*doing all the good* you can to every body, you  
 are selfish, and seek your own things only, and  
 are *oppressive* and *hard* with those you have  
*Power over* or *Advantage against*; if instead  
 of *setting your Affections on things above*, and  
*having your Conversation in Heaven*, you are  
 wholly intent upon the World and the things  
 of it; if that be the Subject of your most se-  
 rious Cares, and the Object of your most vi-  
 gorous Pursuits, and you go on in such a  
 Course as this to the end of your Way, you  
 cannot inherit Eternal Life; if the Word of  
 God be true, and there be any weight in the  
 Reason of the thing itself, you cannot; you  
 cannot but *perish*, eternally perish. And can  
 it then be an *indifferent* thing to us *what our*  
*way is*? Can it be *all one* whether we live a  
 godly or ungodly Life, when our Everlasting  
 Weal or Woe doth certainly depend upon it?  
 O that we were *wise* and *understood this*, that

**Serm. II** we would consider our later End ! then we  
 ~~~~~ durst not *despise*, durst not but *consider* our way.

And those who have good Hope thro' Grace that they are *in the way that leads to Life*, are concern'd to regard their *particular Paths*, to look well to their Goings and every Step they take, because they know not how much their vigorous Advances in Grace and Holiness, and their careful Improvement of all Opportunities of *doing Good*, may add to the degrees of their *Glory and Joy* in Heaven ; nor how much their Remissness and the unevenness of their Walking may take from them ; But this I am sure we all ought to fear, lest a Promise
 Heb. 4. 1. *being left us of entering into that Rest*, and we having by Faith laid hold on that Promise, any of us should so much as seem to come short, should seem either to others or to ourselves, should in the nature of the thing be in danger of it, or should come short of any of that measure to which, if we had been more careful, we might have attain'd.

Nothing can be more proper to awaken us to put a Value upon our own Ways, than to lay this to Heart, that our present time is *Seedtime*, and as we sow now we shall be reaping to Eternity. The Husbandman sows his Ground with care, because he knows that when what he sows comes up again, it will appear whether it was sown wisely and well or no. Gal. 6. 7, 8, the matter is brought into a little compass, *If we sow to the Flesh in a carnal sensual Life, we shall of the Flesh reap Corruption ; but if we sow to the Spirit, we shall of the Spirit reap Life everlasting : And then I am sure 'tis Folly for us to despise our own way.*
 For

For Application.

The Application of this plain and practical Discourse lies upon yourselves, Brethren, the Lord help us all to apply it!

1. Let it be a Caution to us not to be *rigid and severe* in our Censures of *other Peoples Ways*, for that's *none of our Business*; we are *incompetent Judges of our Brethren*, for we know not their *Hearts*; nor of their *Works*, for we know not the *Principles* they act from, or the *Ends* they aim at, nor the *one half* of what is requisite to be known in order to the passing a right Judgment upon them; we can *judg* at best but *by the outward appearance*, and therefore 'tis ten to one we are *deceiv'd* in our Judgment. And as we have not *Ability*, so we have not *Authority* to judg concerning them, we step into the Throne of God if we do: *What have we to do to judge another man's Servant? To his own Master he stands or falls.* We are to *hope charitably* concerning our Brethren, and to put the *best construction* upon their Words and Actions that they will bear; but as to their Way, and the End of it, *the Lord only knows* that, and to him we must leave it.

And this is another good Reason why we should not pretend to judg our Brethren and *their way*, because we have enough to do to judg *ourselves* and *our own way*: And here it becomes us as much to be *strict and severe*, as in judg'ing of our Brethren it becomes us to be *candid and charitable*, and make the *best of every thing*.

Serm. II

2. Let it be a Charge to us to look well to our own ways. Let others, if they be overtaken in a Fault, be restor'd with a Spirit of Meekness; and let us not be curious in prying into the Fault, and examining all the circumstances of it; nor sharp in upbraiding them with their Carelessness; but let every Man prove his own Work, let him bring that to the Touchstone, and be very critical in trying it, and earnest with God in Prayer, to discover him to himself; and if he find his Heart upright with God, then he shall have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.

Gal. 6. 1, 4.

O that I could prevail with you that are Young, betimes to make Conscience of what you say and do, and oblige yourselves to live by Rule, and not, as most young People, to despise your own way. When you go out into the World, and begin to be for yourselves, as you say, I beseech you do well for yourselves. When you are gone from under the Influence of your Parents and Masters, yet still continue under the Influence of the Good Education they gave you, and think not when you are set at liberty from them you may live at large. With what Grief have I sometimes heard that vain Song put into the Mouths of young People, which begins, *From grave Lessons and Restraints!* I cannot repeat it, nor desire to do it, but 'tis design'd to teach them to triumph in having shaken off the Shackles of Virtue, and laid the Reins in the Neck of Lust. It's time to warn, my Brethren, and to shew ourselves zealous for the Honor of God and Conscience, of Virtue and serious Piety, for that's it I here in the name

of

of my Great Master contend for, and not the Serm. II
 petty private Interests of any Party: Let 
 them take their Lot, *despise their Way*, and
 spare not; the Kingdom of God is not *Meats*
 and *Drinks*, either the *Imposition* or the *Op-*
position of those Matters of doubtful *Disputa-*
tion; but it is *Righteousness* and *Peace* and
Joy in the Holy Ghost; 'tis the Great and Fun-
 damental Laws of Christianity, *Repentance*
towards God, and *Faith towards our Lord Je-*
sus Christ; 'tis *Humility* and *Meekness*; 'tis
Sobriety and *Temperance*; 'tis *Chastity* and
strict Modesty; 'tis *Justice* and *Equity*; 'tis
 universal *Charity* and *Beneficence* that I am
 pressing upon you: These are the *Ways* you
 must *walk* in if ever you hope to find rest to
 your Souls; these *Ways* must be your *Ways*,
 and in these you must persevere to the End,
 and in these and all the Acts of Devotion,
 and the instituted Exercises of Religion you
 must live a Life of Communion with God:
 In urging these, I say again, it's *time to be in*
Earnest, when the Enemies of serious God-
 linefs are not only so *subtil* as *secretly* to
 weaken its Principles, and *sap* its Founda-
 tions underground, but so *daring* as openly
 to attack all its strong Holds; when you are
 taught by a celebrated Poet to say,

[*Rules,*
That Conscience and Heavens Fears, Religion's
Are but State-Bells to toll in Pious Fools.

This is instructing you how to *despise your*
own Ways; but *cease my Son to bear the In-*
struction which causeth to err from the words of
Knowledge: And the Lord rebuke those who Pro. 19. 27.
give such destructive Instructions, even the
Lord

Serm. II *Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke them,*
 and snatch those as Brands out of the Burning
 who incline their Ear to such Instruction.

That which I am perswading you all to, both Young and Old, is, to keep yourselves and all your Words and Actions under a strict Discipline : Are you your own Masters ? Be faithful Masters then to yourselves, and not careless ones.

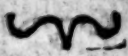
First, Be strict in your Enquiries concerning your *present Way*, and herein deal faithfully with yourselves, and do not despise a Matter upon which your All depends. Are you in the *Broad-way* that leads to Destruction, or in the *Narrow-way* that leads to Life ? Among the many that walk in the way of their own Hearts, or among the few that walk in the way of Gods Commandments ? Christ is the way, are you in Christ ? Holiness is the way, and is it the way of Holiness that you are walking in ? Be willing to find out the worst of your Case, you need not be afraid to do so, while it may be amended, be it never so bad, and concern'd to find it out ; for if it be bad, and not amended in time, it will shortly be past retrieve.

Take heed of deceiving yourselves in a Matter of such vast moment as this is. The Word of God has plainly told you once and again, That there is a way which seemeth right unto a Man, and he saith, I shall have Peace tho' I go on in it, but the End thereof is the Ways of Death ; and will you suffer yourselves to be cheated into your own Ruin when you have such fair warning given you ? How bitter will the Reflection upon it be hereafter

Prov. 14.

12. 16. 25.

if

if you thus put a cheat upon your own Souls! **Serm. II**
Self-Deceivers will be *Self-Destroyers*, and for
 that reason to *Eternity Self-Tormentors*. 

For the Lords sake, Sirs, and for your own
 precious Soul's sake, bring this Matter to an
 issue quickly, by *making your Calling* and
your Election sure, and so making your Salva-
 tion sure. You are busie to make other
 things sure that neither *can* be made sure,
 nor are *worth* making sure: O that you
 would make this sure which may and must
 be *made sure*, and leave it no longer in su-
 spense! You cannot but *tremble* every Step
 you take, as long as your own Conscience
 tells you, if you give them leave to be faith-
 ful, that 'tis a Step forward in the way of *Sin*
 and *Death*; but if you have good Ground
 to hope that through Grace you are *making*
in the way of good Men, that leads to Life and
 Happiness, you may go on *cheerfully*; you
 may sing in that way? Believe *this* Matter
 therefore *worth settling*.

Secondly, Be *strict and impartial* in your
Reflections upon your past ways, and do not
 despise them because they are *past*, for they
 are not *past and gone*, not *gone* out of God's
 Remembrance. Now therefore thus saith the
 Lord of Hosts, Consider your Ways. Set your
 Hearts to your Ways; so the Word is; Apply
 your Minds seriously to think of them, and
 lay the concern of them near your Hearts.
 Compare the Temper of your Minds, and
 the Tenor of your Lives with the Rule of
 God's Word, which is right and straight,
 and is therefore *Index suis & obliquis*, is of use
 to shew you the crooked Ways into which you
 have

Serm. II have turn'd aside; as far as you have *varied* and *deviated* from that, you have gone *wrong*. Find out the particular Obliquities of your Thoughts and Affections, your Words and Actions, that you may know what to sorrow for, as the *Plague of your own Heart*, and what to get *heal'd*; for a Disease that is *known* is *half cur'd*. Be particular in your Reviews, that you may be so in your penitential Acknowledgments; may be able to say not only, I have *done Evil*, but I have done *this Evil*; and not only so, but *thus and thus have I done*; as Aaron, who on the Day of Atonement, that *day to afflict the Soul, was to confess* over the Scape-goat *all the Iniquities of the Children of Israel, and all their Transgressions in all their Sins*, the Sins themselves and all the Aggravations of them. And usually the more *particular* we are in the Confession of Sin, the more Comfort we have in the Sense of the Pardon, and the better fortify'd against Temptations to relapse and return to Folly: *Dolus versatur in generalibus.*

Lev. 16. 21.

'Tis good to be making penitential Reflections *every day* upon our Sins of *daily* Infirmary; and the more *frequently* this Work is done, the more *easie* it will be. *Even Reckonings make long Friends*: If we daily *audit* Accounts with our own Consciences, and examine *what we have done* each day; If in the close of every Week we do as God did look upon the Weeks-work, and behold all that we have done: If before we attend on the Lord at his Table we be *particular* in censuring ourselves for what has been amiss, and renew our Repentance, and fetch in
fresh

fresh Assurances of the Divine Favour in Serm. II
 Christ, we shall shew that we have indeed a
 value for our Way, and the Great Day of
 Account will be no Terror to us.

Thirdly, Be very circumspect and considerate as to the particular Paths that are before you. Do nothing rashly, but everything with due Care. Let David's Resolution be yours, and stick to it, *I said I will take heed to my Ways.* He that walks uprightly, walks surely, will see to it that he goes upon sure Grounds in opposition to walking at all Adventures, and going on frowardly in the way of his Heart. You put Contempt upon your Ways if you do not make Conscience of them. Dread that wicked Notion, that 'tis all alike what you do; though you be never so poor and low in the World, and never so inconsiderable among Men, and your Way never so little taken notice of, yet God's Eye is upon it, and therefore yours should be so. Do nothing rashly, for fear of doing amiss. Psal. 39. 1.

As those that value their own Souls cannot but think themselves concern'd to keep their Hearts with all diligence, so those that value their own Ways cannot but see themselves as much concern'd to ponder the Path of their Feet; which Direction follows the former, and is given in pursuance of it. Whatevcr you go about, consider diligently what is before you: Stand not gazing about you, and making your Remarks upon other Peoples Ways, but let your Eyes look right on, and your Eyelids look streight before you, for your Concern is with your own Ways: Let not your Eyes turn, lest your Feet follow them to the right

Serm. 12 *right hand or to the left.* Let Heaven behead fixed find you walk towards, and the Scripture the fixed Rule you walk by, and then you'll walk *steadily*, and with a *Holy Security*. And as those that value their own Souls cannot do better for them than to commit the keeping of them to God, as to a faithful Creator, and to Jesus Christ the Bishop of Souls, who has taken the oversight of them, not of constraint, but willingly; so those that value their own Way cannot do better concerning it, than to commit their Way, to commit their Works unto the Lord. Having chosen his Word for your Rule, be led by his Spirit. I know (saith the Prophet) that the Way of Man is not in himself, neither is it in Man that walketh to direct his Steps. We ought therefore in all our Ways to acknowledge God, and to depend upon the Conduct and Support of his Grace which he has promis'd to those that seek him, and refer it to him to chuse out their Way, and to sit Chief; in dependance upon which every good Christian may promise himself the same Satisfaction that the Psalmist pleaseth himself with, Thou shalt guide me with thy Counsel, and afterwards receive me to Glory.

Jer. 10. 23.

Psal. 37. 24.

And now am I leaving you at parting under any serious sollicitous Concern about your own Way, resolving for the future to walk more circumspectly than you have done, in the Strength of Divine Grace? And is this your Resolution? The Lord keep it always in the Imagination of the Thought of your Heart, and thereby establish your Way before him.



FINIS.